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## PHILOSOPHERS IN COUNCIL

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THE Tenth International Congress of Philosophy took place in Amsterdam from August 11th to 18th, 1948. It was largely but unevenly attended. The Dutch, Belgians, French and Swiss were there in force. There was a fair representation from Scandinavia, U.S.A. and England. (I say England advisedly, for the Scots were as rare as they are at conferences of the Mind Association and Aristotelian Society). There were some Germans (all from the Western Zones), Italians, and South Americans, and here and there a Spaniard. There were three Australians. The Eastern European countries were represented only by Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary. The large and promising Polish delegation was prevented from coming at the last moment. There was never any prospect of attendances from the Balkans or U.S.S.R. The official languages were French and English.

After the solemn opening session on the first evening the time was divided between plenary sessions, occupying the whole of the morning, and simultaneous special sessions, ranging over the whole area of philosophical discourse, in the afternoons. The plenary sessions commanded the greater public attention and were clearly intended to occupy pride of place. There were never more than two addresses in the course of the morning, and there was plenty of time for discussion; whereas as many as five papers in each field were sometimes given at the special sessions in the afternoon, and the discussions had often only just started when they had to be closed. As our Dutch hosts were so efficient and hospitable in every detail, it seems churlish to accuse the committee of

management of a fundamental mistake in policy; more especially as it was merely following a tradition, and as (according to those who participated) the Paris congress in 1937 went much further in the same wrong direction. Nevertheless it has to be insisted that the emphasis on plenary sessions is not helpful to philosophical discussion and does not further the general purposes for which international conferences may be presumed to exist.

The value of an international conference may be measured by the following requirements. First of all, it should enable philosophers of various countries to meet each other unofficially. Secondly, it should provide opportunities for close and detailed comparison of the work proceeding in the different countries. Thirdly, it should enable workers in the same field to spend long enough together to effect some real common advance in this special subject. Fourthly, and by no means negligibly, it should so dispose the stage machinery as to discountenance oratory and propaganda; for these are factors which bedevil honest discussion and prevent disagreement from issuing in co-operation.

The first objective was achieved at the Amsterdam Congress; if anyone failed to meet thinkers from other countries whom he would have liked to meet, he had only himself to thank; the opportunities were there, and most of us used them. Those (and there were not a few) who were caught on one side or the other of the language-barrier will have learnt what they should have learnt as undergraduates, that one cannot be fully civilized in one language only. The second objective, that of comparing the contributions of different countries, is in any case best attained indirectly by arranging for speakers from those countries to say their pieces. The organizing committee was scrupulously fair in assigning opportunities to the various nationals, and if those present did not go outside their own circle, that, again, was their own fault. In this connexion it should be said that the objective of international interchange of views was seriously impeded by the otherwise admirable habit of loyalty



to one's friends. Particularly as attendances began to thin out, towards the end of the afternoon and towards the close of the congress itself, delegations tended to rally on behalf of those whom they knew, instead of trying to explore the minds of those whom they did not know and would have no further opportunity of meeting. There was one occasion when the eminent French Scholastic philosopher Boyer spoke on our knowledge of the soul to a gathering of French priests at 2 p.m., all of whom left at 2.45 and were replaced by a British contingent gathered to listen to Professor Emmet of Manchester talking about Samuel Alexander. It would have been more in harmony with an international occasion if French Scholastics had learnt something about Alexander and the English (of all brands) had learnt what a representative French Scholastic thought about our knowledge of the soul.

It is, however, in respect of the third and fourth objectives that the Congress was least satisfactory; and the main reason was the relative importance attached to plenary and special sessions. The plenary sessions were like mass meetings, and provided an irresistible incitement to oratory. Far too many of the pronouncements were manifestos: a Scholastic manifesto from L. de Raeymaeker (Louvain), Marxian manifestos from A. Banfi (Milan) and L. Rieger (Praha); a liberal-Christian manifesto from Charles Werner (Geneva); a liberal anti-Marxian manifesto from Karl Popper (London); and a portentous philosophy-of-history manifesto from R. Coulborn (Atlanta University, Georgia, U.S.A.). It was all too much *ex cathedra*; and discussion was controversial rather than constructive. They were all cogent and persuasive, and some of them showed here and there that they could have made original contributions if they had not been trying to avoid complications. What was obviously an embarrassment to the inquirers among them was, however, a gift to the propagandists. Surely, among philosophers, it is a pity to give the propagandists anything.

Some, it is true, managed better than others. Dempf (Vienna) gave a quiet and thoughtful account of the spirit

of mediaeval philosophy; Calogero (Rome) contributed suggestively to aesthetics; and, above all, Bertrand Russell gave a magnificently lucid address on the postulates of scientific inference. He showed conclusively how to hold a large audience on a technical subject, without concessions to party feeling and without sacrifice of professional standards. His address was actually very significant for the existing crisis of culture (as Kant's *Transcendental Deduction* was in its day); but it kept throughout to the plane of philosophy, and achieved communication not by being popular, but simply by being clear. It was, in fact, a model of its kind. If all addresses to plenary sessions had been similarly planned, the plenary sessions might have been more successful. As it was, they elicited little that was new, and, what is worse, they absorbed the best hours of the day.

It could be argued that this state of affairs was due not to plenary sessions in themselves, but to an unphilosophical attitude among the assembled philosophers. That such an attitude existed is unhappily true. There were blocks of opinion at the Congress which were determined to present a solid front and not to be influenced by the course of argument. But these people did not seriously disturb the peace at the afternoon special sessions. In fact they were often reasonable and contributive. They reserved their pressure-group techniques for the business meetings and the plenary sessions. After all, they were philosophers, if also partisans; the plenary sessions elicited the partisan in them, the special sessions elicited the philosopher. It is all a question of atmosphere; small sessions promote intimacy and lower temperatures; large sessions have the reverse effect. The moral is: where passions run high, create a chatty and informal atmosphere in which oratory will appear ridiculous. On the whole, this is what happened at the special sessions.

It was at the special sessions that the philosophers really got down to business. They varied, naturally, with the quality of the paper and with the time left for discussion; the best of them were very good indeed, and will remain in the memory



of those who participated as important experiences in their lives. But there were too many of them; they were held at intervals of three-quarters of an hour throughout the afternoon, and there was never time for the close and effective discussion for which (unlike the plenary sessions, which had the time) they could have afforded the opportunity. One can appreciate the motives which animated the organizing committee in issuing invitations comprehensively and generously; but as a result the programme was depressed well below the Plimsoll line. Most discussions take time to start, and international discussions more especially; and it was only rarely that any significant progress was made before the next session was due to begin. Fewer sessions and more time for discussion, or, better still, the spacing out of special sessions at the expense of the plenary sessions, would have been welcome.

As to the contributions of the special sessions to philosophy, it is impossible for any one member of the conference to speak with any assurance. Certain sessions stand out in the writer's own mind, and he has compared notes with some who attended other sessions; but any conclusions reached on this basis will be far from exhaustive, as 304 papers were planned for the week and the great majority of them were actually delivered. The sessions devoted to Logic and general methodology, and to Symbolic Logic, being attended continuously by the same inner circle, appear to have attained a certain continuity of discussion, and those who participated were able in no small degree to learn from each other and to become acquainted with progress in the subject in other countries. Outstanding papers in these sections were given by G. F. von Wright on *Confirmation*, I. M. Bochenski on *L'état et les besoins de l'histoire de la logique formelle*, by Max Black on *The Justification of Induction*, by L. J. Russell on *Propositions and Proposals*. Von Wright, of Helsingfors, Finland, but already appointed to succeed Wittgenstein in Cambridge, was of interest to British philosophers, many of whom had not met him; his discourse was much admired; if it was somewhat peppered with hieroglyphics, that is after

all part of the game, though it deters non-specialists from comment. Bochenski's plea for a further study of formal logic with special reference to its history was timely and eloquent; he hails from the Catholic University of Fribourg, Switzerland, and was one of the most engaging, ingenious and versatile members of the Congress. Black's paper was an uncompromising statement of the view that induction needs *no* justification; the British and Americans, being either sympathetic or immune, took it in their stride; to some others it was disturbingly paradoxical. Russell's theory of proposals is of considerable contemporary importance; it provides a *via media* between treating certain sentences (including the so-called judgments of value) as assertions that so-and-so is the case, and treating them *simply* as personal impressions or recommendations. "Proposals are recommendations from one person or body of persons to another for the adoption of a common policy in some field of activity, and can be discussed or argued about, by the giving of reasons for and against; and people can disagree about them just as they can disagree about what is or is not the case. But they cannot be proved or disproved." Examples given are the principles of self-contradiction, the principle of causality, the principle that God is working in the world, and the principle that there is one fundamental human nature common to all men. More will be heard of this paper; for its terminology is attractive and convenient and it offers a suggestion which if accepted would close a main contemporary dispute.

In other sections there was less continuity, and everything depended on the quality of individual papers. One which impressed everyone who heard it was that presented by one of the few Germans present, J. Ebbinghaus (Marburg) on *Empiricism and A priorism in Morals*; a reconsideration of the problems raised by Kant, and defence of him in his strictest interpretation. E. Dupréel, who is professor at Brussels, and is expected to be chairman and host to the next International Congress, to be held there in 1952, gave two papers, one on Value levels and another on Sociology, both



extremely suggestive, and both expressed with that exquisite felicity and lightness of touch which only the elder generation of French-speakers can compass. Among the Americans, mention should be made of Sidney Hook (Columbia University, New York), who played a prominent part in the Congress but was unfortunately caught up in the section entitled *Man, Mankind and Humanity*, and had to conform to the popular style; his talk on *Nature and the Human Spirit* was a clear, trenchant, and superficial exhortation to the human race to look to nothing but their own efforts, and especially not to God. By way of contrast, mention should also be made of Charles Hartshorne (Chicago), whose paper on *Existential Propositions and the Law of Categories* came to my attention only after the Congress; it redresses the balance with a new and profound and unexpected defence of the notion of necessary being. A most impressive paper on a similar topic, a model of perspicuity in a field where vagueness is habitual, was given by G. Verbeke (Louvain) on *Finitude*.

A great deal of attention was devoted to studies in the history of philosophy, some of which were definitely original, while nearly all of them were scholarly. In France, in particular, there appears to be a concentration of talent in this field. There is a marked contrast in this respect between the Continent and Great Britain, where philosophical discussion is intensely alive and philosophical scholarship all but extinct. Eminent among the papers in this subject was one on *Finality in the Philosophy of Spinoza* by Paul Siwek, S.J. (Fordham University, New York), and an exposition by F. van Steenberghen, of Louvain, of his much disputed reconstruction of the development of 13th century philosophy.

Certain general features of the Congress which ran contrary to at least one member's expectations perhaps deserve mention. In the first place, of 304 papers, only six were devoted to Ethics. This was in marked contrast with the Joint Session at Durham in July, where the ethical interest was dominant throughout, and is also in contrast with the balance of articles over the years in this JOURNAL. Evidently

the concern of the British peoples with morals is distinguishing and peculiar. In the second place, in contrast with the experience of many post-war conferences on the Continent, there was little to be heard about Existentialism, and a notable absence of Existentialists; it may have been my bad luck, but I met only one: a Dutchman who was trying to combine Existentialism with neo-Calvinism. Several Catholic philosophers had come prepared with reasoned refutations, and they were probably surprised at having nothing to refute. A possible explanation is that in France Existentialism has never had an academic standing, and the French contingent was for the most part strictly academic.

A third point of interest was the number of papers devoted to the subject of "humanism" (or, in one case, "humanitism"). This is another theme which exercises the Continent far more than it exercises Great Britain, where, as is well known, analysis has taken the place of doctrine. The sense of intensity about it is due to a feeling that it may form an intellectual bridge between the ideologies of Eastern and Western Europe. In fact, it was advocated as such by J. Král, professor at the Charles University of Praha. The composite doctrine towards which one wing of the Congress was feeling its way is one which insists on the supremacy of man, both over nature on the one hand, and as against supernature on the other. It accommodates quite conveniently the main theses of "dialectical materialism", with its conversion of "quantitative" into "qualitative" difference at the crucial dialectical moment; it accommodates also the still persisting hopes of optimistic liberal gradualists, with their appeal to "values" and their belief in the efficacy of piecemeal human effort. It is interesting to note how on the Continent it has largely replaced the older materialism; and it probably represents not unfairly the unacknowledged over-beliefs of many British analysts. Whether it can provide any kind of spiritual bond between Eastern and Western Europe is another matter. Western humanists are profoundly anti-dogmatic and experimentalist in tone and temper, and found



the overbearing and singularly untentative certainties of the East and of its Western adherents distinctly too much for them. Those doughty Anglo-Saxon anti-theistic warriors, Bertrand Russell and Sidney Hook, who could both be rightly described as humanists, were at least as much exasperated by the teaching and tactics of the Marxian bloc as any of their more religiously-minded colleagues. It is at least arguable that the conflict between dogmatists and experimentalists is as fundamental as that between theists and humanists; and in any case there is no certain or necessary alignment between any two of the four groups.

A word should here be said concerning the contributions to their own kind of philosophy by those who admit to *la pensée engagée*. What the rest of us have to expect of them in the name of philosophy is not the renunciation of their "engagement", frustrating as some of us might find it, but rather that they should continue to develop the consequences of their assumptions in such a way as to illuminate the field which we are all attempting to cultivate. What we have the right to deprecate is the constant reiteration of the premises without any serious attempt to develop them. By this test the Catholic exponents of *la pensée engagée* came out very well. They did a great deal of hard thinking on other people's issues as well as on their own; they exhibited many differences of opinion amongst themselves; they argued their points closely and cogently; they kept drawing new and interesting consequences from their general position; and their controversial manners were polished and disciplined. The Marxian exponents of *la pensée engagée* were less impressive. Occasionally one had glimpses of a new angle, as when Rieger, in his plenary session, turned aside from the prescribed *cliché* and began to expound a philosophy of work; but for the most part they repeated the familiar formulae, *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*. If, instead of "taking the doctrine and feeding us with it", they had added to the Marxian philosophy as well as the Catholics added to Catholic philosophy, or as well as

some of the Neithers added to philosophy in general, it would have been better both for others and for themselves.

To sum up. The hospitality was generous, the organization on the spot was excellent, the opportunities for unofficial contacts limited only by the programme (which bound no one who wanted to escape it, and there were in any case so many opportunities provided within it), national and ideological tendencies were fairly represented in the choice of speakers, and some of the papers definitely contributed to the development of the subject. There were too many papers, too much oratory and not enough discussion; and occasionally the echoes of public controversy were not sufficiently sublimated. Any reform, such as the pruning of plenary sessions, which would make for greater concentration of thought and discussion, could confidently be recommended to the organizing committee for Brussels, 1952. But the main after-effect is one of exhilaration; one remembers the discussions at the lunch-tables, starting from nothing in particular and extending genially over the universe, or into the nooks and crannies of scholarship; one remembers the seats in the University garden, and the restaurants where one dined in the evening, cutting and thrusting among one's equals, or unexpectedly finding oneself in the unofficial presence of the acknowledged masters; one remembers the unfamiliar and encouraging sense of being surrounded by those whose life's work had the same centre as one's own; and one values beyond estimate the privilege of being able to write to colleagues in other countries, not as strangers and out of the blue, but from the basis of a week's intense common experience. Despite certain distracting influences, there genuinely is an international community of learning, and we who were at Amsterdam in August, 1948, found it struggling but articulate. Its future will depend on how far faith and enterprise can prevail against certainty and solidarity.



## THE NOMINALIST ERROR

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By T. A. ROSE

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THERE is a very broad usage of the term "nominalism" according to which any school that introduces linguistic notions in the process of investigating philosophical problems is called "nominalist".<sup>1</sup> To this more or less non-committal usage exception can hardly be taken. But alongside this there are what purport to be more technical usages. An examination of these usages reveals that for some theorists the description of a view as "nominalist" simply means that it regards as mind-dependent (fictitious) things which other philosophers hold to be independent (real); while for other theorists it means that the view in question treats as specially linguistic in character things which other thinkers would say are independent of language. When, for example, we describe a solution to a problem as "nominal" we ordinarily mean only that the solution is a fictitious one, not that there is something specially linguistic about it; but when Mill supports what he calls the "nominalist" theory of definition<sup>2</sup> he is claiming that definitions can be given only of names, and not of other things. The problem, then, is to give an account of nominalism which, while it does not fly in the face of usage, is more precise and thus might help to bring out some definite resemblances between older and more recent ways of thinking. The object of this paper is to indicate how such an account

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the term in the translator's introduction to Chwistek's *Limits of Science* seems to be of this character. Cf. S. G. Tornay, *Ockham: Studies and Selections*, p. 20: "To sum up, Ockham stresses the grammatical and verbal element enough to be called a genuine nominalist."

<sup>2</sup> *A System of Logic*, I, viii, 5. Cf. Russell's usage in the introduction (p. xiv) to the second edition of *The Principles of Mathematics*. In view of the difficulty of determining just who the Scholastic nominalists were and why they are called nominalists, Russell's vague reference to Scholasticism is of little assistance.

of nominalism might be given and to supply some reasons why nominalism so described must be rejected as erroneous.

We may begin from the traditional notion that for the nominalist *universalia sunt nomina*. But if it is true, as Acton has said,<sup>3</sup> that the so-called "problem of universals" "is not necessarily connected with universals at all, and only gets the name because the theory of universals was one of the earliest and most generally accepted theories to account for the fact that the same thing may be said about a great many different individuals", then strictly speaking the doctrine of universals must be looked upon as only one account of this fact and *universalia sunt nomina* another, for the latter view might amount to a straightout denial of "universals". At the same time, the fact that theorists think there is a "problem of universals" at least suggests that while there is no difficulty about the existence of the meanings of "proper" or "singular" names like "Plato", there is some difficulty about the existence of what are ordinarily taken to be the meanings of "general" names like "human", the explanation being, of course, that the meanings of the former are not held to be predicable of a plurality of things while those of the latter are. Thus, whereas "human" in the sentence "Plato and Zeno are human" would usually be considered not to mean something linguistic, presumably the nominalist would maintain that, although the words "Plato" and "Zeno" may refer to something non-linguistic, what the word "human" signifies is in some sense a name, and the sentence properly expressed should read in some such way as this:

1. "Plato and Zeno are 'human'" (where 'human' refers to the particular sign being used, e.g. the mark on this page)

or

2. "Plato and Zeno are 'human'" (where 'human' refers to the kind of sign 'human' or to an instance of this kind of sign)

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<sup>3</sup> H. B. Acton, "The Theory of Concrete Universals", *Mind*, Oct., 1936, p. 418.



*or*

3. "Plato and Zeno are called 'human'" (where 'human' refers to the particular sign being used)

*or*

4. "Plato and Zeno are called 'human'" (where 'human' refers to the kind of sign 'human' or to an instance of this kind of sign).

Postponing the questions whether these translations are in reasonable enough accord with the nominalist formula and whether philosophers have been called "nominalists" from their adherence to doctrines approximating to those presupposed by these translations, I now propose to show that none of these translations is satisfactory as regards either meaning or form. On the first point it could be said that all the translations fail to convey the meaning of the original sentence. On the face of it, at any rate, the original sentence does not, as do translations 1 and 2, ascribe a linguistic character to Plato and Zeno nor is it, in the manner of translations 3 and 4, a statement about linguistic usage. If the nominalist solution to the "problem of universals" is that whatever can be said about many things is a character that has to do with words or their usage, the solution involves an absurd restriction on the range of possible assertions.

Furthermore, against the view that universals are names or, more accurately, the view that accounts for the fact that the "same thing" can be said of many by treating this same thing as a sign, logical criticisms can be made; and these clinch the argument against the nominalist solution to the "problem of universals". The general position is that if the nominalist translation is to be more satisfactory than the original sentence then, on the view presupposed by the "problem of universals", either it must avoid the formal interpretation being put upon it that it is saying the same thing of many or, if it is still interpretable in this way, it must achieve its significance by a method quite different from that of the original sentence; it must, in fact, restrict itself to a method which uses "proper" names alone; if it uses "general"

names the formal "problem" simply recurs and no object has been accomplished by the translation.

Let us take, to begin with, the expression "human" (referring to the kind of sign "human" or to an instance of this kind of sign). This is nothing but a vague substitute for some hypothetical general name which covers all instances of the sign used to refer to what is ordinarily taken to be the quality human, and which in fact is not properly mentionable without recourse to this presumably objectionable meaning. In order to define the sign "human" (which here seems to involve "humain", "menschlich", etc.) it would clearly be necessary, if not sufficient, to refer to the kind of thing man or to use a general name referring to this kind of thing. However, even if this kind of sign were definable without reference to the kind of thing man, it would still be of the same form as the meaning of "human" in the original sentence, or the word referring to it would still be a general name. Consequently the expression "human" (referring to the kind of sign "human" or to an instance of this kind of sign) does not avoid the difficulties that are held to attach to the general name "man" of the original sentence, and in so far as a translation contains this expression it cannot be said to have used a different method in saying the same thing of many.

The expression "human" (referring to the particular sign being used, for example, the mark on this page) is more difficult to deal with; but while "human" so used might be regarded as a singular name in some sense in which "human" as ordinarily used is not, it is certainly not singular in the sense required for the nominalist thesis; for if the difficulty with the form of the ordinary meaning of "human" is its generality, there appears to be a not essentially dissimilar difficulty with "human" when it refers to the mark on this page, for this mark at least belongs to something which suffers change of position and has temporal phases. The latter point is the more important one, and it might be

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\*I am indebted for this type of criticism to Professor John Anderson.



expressed in this way: if it is said that there is any difficulty in things of the same kind occurring in different places it would have to be shown why there is no difficulty in the same kind of thing's occurring in different times.

Thus nominalist modes of translation 1 and 2 could only be justified in respect of their form on the assumption of a doctrine of point-instants, of things that have no extension or duration; otherwise there is no possibility of avoiding the use of general names. Formally, translation 1 is a more plausible reduction than translation 2, but, as we have seen, even "the mark on this page" is not a singular name in the sense required, unless it can be shown that the concept of temporal diversity is free from any difficulties that might attach to that of spatial diversity. And this observation destroys the presuppositions of the so-called "problem of universals" because it implies that there is no way at all of saying anything except by using general terms.

The next question for consideration is whether there is not an important formal difference between translations 1 and 2 on the one hand and translations 3 and 4 on the other. Whereas translations 1 and 2 retain the "are" of the original sentence and simply substitute a different predicate name for "human", translations 3 and 4 bear a striking resemblance to those theories of predication that try to replace "is" or "are" by an expression like "is an instance of" or "exemplifies". The two types of translation are not, however, unconnected. It might be said that translation 1 represents dissatisfaction with "general" names, the attempt to reduce general names to proper names, and a consequent absurd departure from the original meaning; that translation 2 represents an attempt to lessen the absurdity in meaning with a consequent resuscitation of the original "problem"; and that translations 3 and 4 try to achieve at least apparent consistency with the meaning of the original sentence and also an improved form by means of the relation *called by*.

It could be argued, then, that it is in order to avoid absurdity in meaning, as much as anything, that there is this

transition from the simple "correction" of the original predicate to the substitution for it of a relational predicate. Once Socrates had substituted "a single large something" for what we might otherwise take to be the meaning of "human" in the sentence "Plato and Zeno are human"<sup>5</sup> he could hardly have said "Plato *is* this single large something" or "Zeno *is* this single large something". He had to introduce the relation of participation, and would have given as his translation: "Plato and Zeno *participate* in this single large something, humanness".

But the difficulty with all such translations is that they involve an infinite regress. In brief, you cannot translate a sentence which asserts the same thing of many into a sentence which does not; so whatever reasons there were for being dissatisfied with the former will also apply to the latter. "Plato is called 'human'" has for its meaning a predicate which is a same thing that can be said of many, *viz.* "called 'human'." It also will need correction, and so on, indefinitely.<sup>6</sup>

Now, since only the doctrines presupposed by translations 1 and 2 explicitly assert that universals are names, we might be tempted to say that they alone are in accord with the nominalist formula, and that consequently they alone are nominalist solutions of the "problem of universals". The doctrines presupposed by translations 3 and 4, on the other hand, not only fail to assert simply that universals are names but have much in common with doctrines like "participation" and "exemplification". Their community with strictly nominalist doctrines, it might be said, consists in the facts that they make use of signs and that they are in all probability genetically related to these doctrines; despite this connection, however, these more sophisticated doctrines using the relation *called by* belong to the group which Ryle describes as looking for "some familiar relation which holds between one particular and another" and trying to "show that the

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<sup>5</sup> *Parmenides*, 132a.

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert Ryle, "Plato's 'Parmenides' (I)", *Mind*, April, 1939, pp. 133 et seq.



relation of being-an-instance-of is a case or species of that".<sup>7</sup> If this policy were adopted, however, it would be found that the great majority of theorists who have been called "nominalists" by reason of their treatment of the "problem of universals" support views which substitute a familiar relation for the *is* of predication and hence are not properly describable as "nominalists". In fact, it is extremely improbable that nominalism of the strict kind exemplified by translations 1 and 2, where both the form and the content of the "same thing" which can be said of many are assimilated to a mark or a sound, ever had any adherents.<sup>8</sup> Such a doctrine does seem to have been ascribed to Roscellinus, but in view of the difficulty of discovering just what Roscellinus himself said, this ascription might well have been an *argumentum ad hominem* or a *reductio ad absurdum* of his opponents rather than something founded upon Roscellinus's actual theories. At any rate, prominent philosophers like Occam, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, who have often been described as nominalists, could easily be shown not to be crude nominalists but to uphold variants of the "significance" theory of universality, which in turn is a species of the "familiar relation" doctrine of predication.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Loc. cit., p. 137. Strictly speaking, it would be necessary to say "the relation signified by the words 'is' or 'are' ", because "being-an-instance of" is subject to the same sort of difficulty as other "familiar relations".

<sup>8</sup> Cf. C. R. S. Harris, *Duns Scotus*, vol. i, p. 142, n. 1; S. C. Tornay, *Ockham: Studies and Selections*, pp. 19 et seq.

<sup>9</sup> Hobbes argues correctly that there are no universal things (i.e. abstract universals); but his view that universality attaches only to names, "names common to many things", makes unanswerable the question why a given thing is called by one name and not by another (v. *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Sir Wm. Molesworth, vol. i, "Computation or Logic", ch. ii, § 6).

For Ockham's theory v. the passage cited by Tornay (op. cit., p. 19): "the universal is twofold: natural and conventional. The first is a natural sign predicable of many things . . . . The conventional universal is one by voluntary institution. Such is the spoken word which is . . . universal because of its being a voluntarily instituted sign for the signification of many things."

In Locke there are several views: (1) "universals" are simply abstract ideas, something required for his doctrine of certain knowledge (cf. *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, IV, vii, 9); (2) universality is the capacity of an abstract idea to signify particular ideas (I, xi, 9; III,

Now, what I propose to call the *nominalist error* consists in confusing the features of symbols with the features of what is symbolised, especially in treating the formal features involved in judgments or assertions, e.g. subject, predicate, copula, etc., as if they were mere linguistic forms. Of course, if there were theories such as that attributed to Roscellinus which treat the matter of assertions as linguistic when it is not, they too would be describable as committing this error; but the important point is that such a view is only a species of a more general type of error. The general type of error, the confusion of symbol and symbolised, has been referred to and described by a number of modern theorists, "symbolic" logicians being particularly interested in it because they think that it has been the source of many so-called "paradoxes". Thus Russell writes: "*Words* all have meaning in the simple sense that they are symbols which stand for something other than themselves. But a proposition, unless it happens to be linguistic, does not contain words: it contains the entities indicated by words";<sup>10</sup> and Carnap insists on the "necessity of keeping in mind the distinction between a designation and the object designated thereby (for instance, between the word 'Paris' and the city of Paris)".<sup>11</sup> Despite this recognition of the general type of error, however, some of the Logical Positivists are inclined to treat the formal features involved in all situations as attaching to the signs rather than to what is signified or, at least, as discussable only in so far as they are so regarded. Such a position is explicitly adopted by Carnap when he says: "the logic of science is nothing other

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iii, 6-9), the abstractness apparently being insisted on here in order to explain why such an idea signifies one group of particular ideas rather than another; (3) universality is the capacity of a particular idea to signify particular ideas (III, iii, 11), something reiterated by Locke in various parts of the *Essay* whenever he wants to emphasise the particularity of all objects of knowledge.

Berkeley criticises the notion of abstraction (*Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction, §§ 13-15) and adopts the third view, in which he is closely followed by Hume (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, i, 7).

All these theorists confuse signification with predication.

<sup>10</sup> *The Principles of Mathematics*, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> *The Logical Syntax of Language*, p. 153.

than the logical syntax of the language of science."<sup>12</sup> Here it is to be emphasised that in rejecting this thesis one would not be denying that the formal features involved in all situations are to be found in language. Indeed, it is partly their presence in language that makes it plausible to say that they are merely linguistic. But the presence of these formal features in language is such that on examining any sentence we shall always find it possible to distinguish within it any number of situations with their formal features. The so-called "formal" features which syntactical analysis discovers in a sentence can only be separated off from these formal features strictly so-called by a consideration of what the sentence is supposed to signify: then the grammatical "subject" of the sentence, for example, is seen to be the word(s) referring to the *thing* about which the person uttering the sentence is asserting something; the grammatical "predicate" is seen to be the word(s) referring to what is asserted about this thing;<sup>13</sup> and so on. Unless meanings had been referred to, it would never have been possible to distinguish within a sentence the grammatical "formal" features from the logical formal features which are already there.

What adds even more to the plausibility of the positivist thesis is just this fact that alongside logic we have grammar with a terminology closely resembling that of logic and lending colour to the view that the discussion of "formal" features can be carried on at the level of language. Logicians, themselves, have always helped to further this confusion because of their reluctance to decide whether they are studying names or terms,<sup>14</sup> sentences or propositions, symbol-manipulation or implication.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. xiii.

<sup>13</sup> In a thoroughly objective logic this would be insufficient. Cf. Hegel's remark: "To define the subject as that of which something is said, and the predicate as what is said about it is mere trifling. It gives no information about the distinction between the two" (*The Logic of Hegel translated from the Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences by W. Wallace*, p. 301). Carnap's account of the "object-language" suggests that for him being a "linguistic" subject is pre-eminently being the name of an objective location or position.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. J. N. Keynes, *Formal Logic*, fourth edition, p. 10; and Mill, *A System of Logic*, Book I, *passim*.



Logicians have also admitted their inability to begin theorising except by way of the investigation of language,<sup>15</sup> but they have never failed to reveal, at the same time, that their aim is different from that of the grammarian. Grammatical studies have for their object the description of historical languages; in attempting to settle what are strictly grammatical problems it is for the most part unnecessary to go beyond usage. In so far as logical studies are concerned with language, however, they seek to set up a language which, while it may be in more or less close agreement with usage, also claims to *correct* usage on the basis of something which is not just usage.

Logical "corrections" of a language are, however, of a very special kind. The discussion and rejection of such phrases as "round squares", for example, would not necessarily be a logical matter, but rather a matter for the particular science which is concerned with geometrical figures. On the other hand, it might well be a logical correction to reject such words as, say, "this", "triangularity", "whiteness", because here logical considerations alone need be appealed to; the word "triangularity", for example, might be rejected because it implies that there exist "abstract universals"; the word "this" because it implies that there exist "abstract particulars". In general, the logical study of language would certainly involve rejecting some of the distinct categories of symbols recognised by ordinary language. Thus the distinction between concrete and abstract nouns could be rejected on the ground that there are not two categories of things corresponding to the two categories of symbols.

In the second place, logical studies correct language by making distinctions which are not recognized in ordinary languages. In particular, logicians might be concerned to distinguish symbols which refer to absolute features from those which refer to functional or relational features. Thus, while in none of the separate propositions of the traditional syllogism in *Barbara* does the same term function as both

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Mill, *op. cit.*, Bk. I, ch. 1; Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

subject and predicate, the middle term functions as subject in the major premise and as predicate in the minor. Accordingly, if the syllogistic form is an actual form, an adequate language will have to contain at least some words whose linguistic properties are such as to allow them to be both symbols for subjects and symbols for predicates. The linguistic categories of noun and adjective are misleading because they suggest that there are two absolutely distinct categories of things. The distinction of function within the signified would be most adequately symbolised by a distinction of function within the language, for example, by the position of words in a sentence relative to the copula-symbol or to the sign of quantity. Different words could take these positions with no change in their own structure, and such a language would be "correct" in contrast with ordinary languages, because it no longer has two categories of symbols, suggesting two categories of terms, but one category of symbols and two categories of symbol functions, corresponding to a single category of terms and two categories of functions which terms may have.

Similar corrections could be made in the particular sciences where specific qualities and specific relations are often confused. It might be said, for example, that words like "perception" and "consciousness" need to be rejected because, for one thing they suggest that what is in fact a relational or functional distinction is an absolute distinction.<sup>16</sup> So long as they are retained in the vocabulary of a particular science they encourage confusion. And the same could be said of many other words in the vocabularies of the particular sciences.

Up to this point I have been indicating how the logical study of language, as distinct from grammatical studies, involves setting up a "corrected" language.<sup>17</sup> A language is

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<sup>16</sup> This in part would be the upshot of papers like "The Knower and the Known" by John Anderson (*Proc. Arist. Soc.*, 1926-7).

<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche makes some important comments on the influence of language on philosophy. E.g. *Beyond Good and Evil* (trans. Helen Zimmern), ch. 1, § 20: "The wonderful family resemblance of all Indian, Greek, and

logically adequate in so far as it successfully symbolises by means of symbol categories and symbol functions the formal features of situations. But suppose a logician were asked to "justify" his language. This would appear to involve (1) an account of the formal features of the situations which constitute the meaning of language; (2) an account of the language; (3) the demonstration that the language does not suggest, for example, that features which are in fact opposed are identical, does not suggest that there are formal differences where there are not, does not suggest that distinctions are absolute when they are relative or functional, and so on.

Here it will be instructive to look at the views of Wittgenstein and Carnap.<sup>18</sup> If I understand him rightly Wittgenstein's opinion would be that all three objects are unattainable: that all a logician can do is simply correct a language and use it, and in that way "show" the formal features of situations. Carnap, on the other hand, would say that (2) is a legitimate procedure but that (1) is not. More often than not Carnap suggests not only that it is impossible to have a theory of the formal features of situations in general, but that there are no such formal features. In either case, however, it would appear that (3) is, on Carnap's view, impossible, something which is admitted in the "principle of tolerance": "It is not our business to set up prohibitions, but to arrive at conventions". "In logic, there are no morals. Everyone is at liberty to build up his own logic, i.e. his own form of language, as he wishes. All that is required of him

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German philosophising is easily enough explained. In fact, where there is affinity of language, owing to the common philosophy of grammar—I mean owing to the unconscious domination and guidance of similar grammatical functions—it cannot but be that everything is prepared at the outset for a similar development and succession of philosophical systems." But Nietzsche correctly takes this to mean that philosophers are to criticise languages.

<sup>18</sup> Since I am concerned with Logical Positivism as providing illustrations of the "nominalist error", the views referred to will be limited to those found in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *The Logical Syntax of Language*: for a fuller discussion of Logical Positivism see "Logical Positivism" by J. A. Passmore, *A.J.P.P.*, vols. xxi, p. 65, xxii, p. 129, xxvi, p. 1. Despite Wittgenstein's warning I take the *Tractatus* literally.



is that, if he wishes to discuss it, he must state his methods clearly, and give syntactical rules instead of philosophical arguments.”<sup>19</sup>

It might appear that both of these theorists avoid the nominalist error: Wittgenstein because of his refusal to admit that logic can be discussed; Carnap because of his decision to restrict his investigations to syntax. But Wittgenstein's contention is not merely that logicians can only correct languages and use them, but that propositions (sentences) have the logical form of the reality which they represent: “Propositions can represent the whole reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it—the logical form”. “Propositions cannot represent the logical form: this mirrors itself in the propositions.”<sup>20</sup>

It has already been pointed out that sentences themselves are situations and that consequently formal features will be found in them as well as in other situations. It might always be possible, then, to find within a sentence a situation of the same form as that which the sentence signifies. For example, although in the sentence “Plato is human” the form of the situation *Plato is human* is not “mirrored” by, is not the same as, the form of the “grammatical” situation involving the words “Plato” as “grammatical” subject and “human” as “grammatical” predicate (since these words are separated in a way that Plato and the quality in question are not) it is nevertheless true that in the sentence the situation “*Plato*” is a word is involved and this has the same form as the situation *Plato is human*. But such relations of “mirroring” would be found to hold between any two groups of things whatsoever. If the notion of “mirroring” is to be at all determinate, it will be found that we can say, at most, along the lines argued before, that a language must to some extent “represent” the formal features of the situations it has for its meaning by making linguistic (e.g. grammatical) distinctions and identi-

<sup>19</sup> Op. cit., pp. 51, 52.

<sup>20</sup> Op. cit., 4.12, 4.121.

fications corresponding to real formal distinctions and resemblances in what is signified. In so far as grammatical distinctions and identifications, functions and relations, are said to be *the same as* the formal distinctions, identifications, functions and relations of what is signified the nominalist error is committed; for the grammatical description of a language can only proceed by making some reference to specific or *material features*, viz. those involved in speech and writing: otherwise it would not be a description of language as distinct from anything else.<sup>21</sup>

Carnap, at first sight, precludes the possibility of his falling into the nominalist error by refusing to consider the question whether there are formal features of situations as distinct from formal features of a language and by admitting in his "principle of tolerance" that the notion of correcting a language is on his view unintelligible. For him the only logic is that which studies the "formation" and "transformation" rules of a language.<sup>22</sup>

Criticism of Carnap would take the form of pointing out, first of all, that his reason for constructing or accepting for syntactical analysis one "object-language"<sup>23</sup> rather than another is none other than his belief that this language has been arrived at by "correcting" the "natural" languages. It resembles very closely, in fact, the sort of language that logicians arrived at not by the mere consideration of linguistic conventions but as a result of what Carnap rejects as "metaphysical" investigations, investigations in which grammatical distinctions are compared with formal distinctions in non-linguistic situations. It is a language in which, for example, a sharp distinction is made between subject-symbols and predicate-symbols, along the lines suggested by other philosophers as a result of "metaphysical" investigations. The classification of symbols which Carnap adopts in his "object-

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<sup>21</sup> What I am asserting is that syntax cannot be purely formal but must be, to use Carnap's term, partly "descriptive" (op. cit., p. 7); if it were purely formal it would no longer be syntax but logic.

<sup>22</sup> Op. cit., §§ 1, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Op. cit., p. 2.

language" consequently depends on a non-linguistic logic. It is only by reference to the forms of meanings or situations in general that Carnap's choice of this object-language rather than some other is *explicable*, let alone justifiable. Unless logic is something other than syntactical analysis there would be no sense in his remark that this object-language is to be preferred to the natural language systems because the latter are "unsystematic and logically imperfect".<sup>24</sup> Again, unless proof depends on something different from linguistic conventions what point could there be in his remark that "given an appropriate rule it can be *proved* that the word series 'Pirots karulize elatically' is a sentence, without reference to the meanings of the words"?<sup>25</sup>

Carnap's nominalism, however, is most apparent in his treatment of logical "junctions" and logical relations. These occur as "individual symbols" of the object-language, viz. " $\sim$ ", " $\cdot$ ", " $\vee$ ", etc.<sup>26</sup> But why do they occur as symbols and not as mere marks unless Carnap takes them to signify something? In the case of the other symbols, viz. variables, constant numerals, predicates, functors, it might be argued with some slight degree of plausibility, although incorrectly, that the relevant formal features always remain at the linguistic level; but this is clearly impossible in the case of junction-symbols. If these do not *signify* junctions, how can they join? Things, for example, are not brought into connection by the mere positing of them along with the mark "or".

In Carnap's writings, then, we find alongside his explicit statement that logic is syntactical analysis the implicit recognition that there is another logic; and the identification of this other logic with syntactical analysis is the nominalist error. And his syntax, even when it is most general and "pure", must be understood in relation to "object-languages" and the logical forms they try to represent. Otherwise it is an elaborate game, of no importance whatsoever to science.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., my italics.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Logicians have long recognised that proof or argument of any kind depends on a "proper" or objective meaning of "implies". Cf. C. I. Lewis, *A Survey of Symbolic Logic*, ch. v, § 5.

<sup>26</sup> Op. cit., p. 16.



Whatever problem there may be in "justifying" a language by giving an account of the formal features of situations in general as well as an account of the features of linguistic situations in particular, the positivist "solution" is clearly worse than the problem. Proceeding from obviously nominalist assumptions Carnap wants to sweep away traditional philosophical problems or to transform them into quite different ones; but he fails to see that these nominalist assumptions take from his own work whatever significance it might otherwise have had.

In the history of philosophy, however, theorists more often "fall into" the nominalist error than openly profess it. For example, one of Hobbes's descriptions of a proposition is that it is "a speech consisting of two names copulated, by which he that speaketh signifies he conceives . . . that the former name is comprehended by the latter".<sup>27</sup> Clearly in so far as comprehension comes into the matter at all it is that of one class of things or set of properties by another, not that of one name by another.

Similarly, Keynes, after remarking that, given a class of objects, that class of objects will have common qualities and a concrete general name, adds: "The extension of a name, then, consists of objects of which the name can be predicated; its intension consists of properties which can be predicated of it."<sup>28</sup> This passage implies that names being predicated of objects and properties of names (in such assertions as "This rectilinear figure is a 'triangle'" and "A 'triangle' is three-sided", where "triangle" is a name) are the basis of the theory of extension and intension. Such a position approximates to crude nominalism; and although it is clear from the general character of Keynes's logic that he is not an extreme nominalist, the notion that extension and intension are absolute leaves us, once the reference to names is removed, with the impression that a term is identical with its class or its properties, something which tends to support the view that

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit., p. 30 (cf. de Morgan's treatment of this problem, *Formal Logic*, ch. 2).

<sup>28</sup> Op. cit., p. 22.

it is possible to have *either* an extensional logic *or* an intensional logic.

Another example of "falling into" nominalism is to be found in Locke's theory of the proposition: "Truth then seems . . . to signify nothing but the joining or separating of signs, as the things signified by them do agree or disagree one with another. The joining or separating of signs here meant, is what by another name we call 'proposition'. So that truth properly belongs only to propositions: whereof there are two sorts, viz., mental and verbal; as there are two sorts of signs commonly made use of, viz., ideas and words."<sup>29</sup> The view that what is being proposed has something to do with words is plausible, because whether what is being proposed has to do with language or not, words or signs of some sort are always used in asserting propositions; and, furthermore, on being confronted with words one could quite legitimately raise the question what is meant by such and such a set of words and might eventually decide that it is meaningless; or, again, one could raise the question what part of speech such and such a word is and so on. But what the speaker is proposing for consideration, and what his audience will take to be proposed, unless they suspect that some of the words in his sentences are meaningless or ambiguous, or unless they are not interested in what he is talking about, is not the sentences but their meaning. If the speaker were proposing a sentence for consideration he would try to make this clear by using different or additional words. And the question, what is proposed—the sentence or its meaning?—is not just a verbal question, as can be seen from the fact that Locke, having maintained that what is proposed is a junction or separation of signs proceeds to say that truth and falsity attach to the signs, not to what is signified.

On the one hand, then, it is the signs that are proposed and that are true. But, on the other hand, the signs are true only if they refer to something else which is true. If the signs are joined and the things they signify "agree" the signs are true; if the signs are joined and the things they

<sup>29</sup> Op. cit., IV, v, 2.

signify "disagree", they are not true. The truth of the signs, then, depends on the truth of the agreement (or, if the signs are separated, on the truth of the disagreement). This indicates that in using signs to make assertions either the question of the truth or falsity of the signs is not raised, or else Locke has a dual theory of truth: (1) that which is the case (an agreement or disagreement of objects signified) is true; (2) that which signifies what is the case (a junction or separation of signs) is true. What is involved in Locke's theory of the proposition and what partly accounts for this dual theory of truth is his nominalist treatment of the copula. Suppose one wanted to assert that coal is black and suppose one put the signs of coal and black together, then even if the meanings of these signs were taken into account the proposition in question could not be asserted unless the being together of the signs were itself a sign, signifying that coal, in Locke's terminology, "agrees with" black. And once it is seen that the being together of the signs must itself be regarded as a sign, and not as a mere being together, if the assertion in question is to be made, it also becomes evident that the copula is something non-linguistic and consequently that what is being proposed is not the putting together or separating of something mental or verbal, but the putting together of *what* is signified; and, in the second place, it becomes evident that what is being claimed as true is not the signs, but, again, what is signified by the signs.

The general weakness of strictly nominalist doctrines, that is, of doctrines which I have described as committing the nominalist error, is one that they share with the doctrine of ideas: they fail to satisfy the requirements of *objectivity*. If it is possible to claim that a proposition is true or to make an assertion, both matter (terms) and form (quantity, subject, copula, predicate)<sup>30</sup> must be regarded *as objective*. If one or

<sup>30</sup> Similarly, if it is possible to claim that *q* follows from *p*, implication must be an objective form. Cf. J. A. Passmore, "Logical Positivism (I)", *A.J.P.P.*, Dec., 1943, p. 70, n. 11. Passmore points out that in connexion with his theory of meaning as verification Schlick confuses sentences and propositions: Schlick falls into nominalism because he sometimes speaks as if implication were a relation holding between sentences instead of between propositions.



the other is taken to consist only in signs, whether these be words or ideas, what is being asserted becomes quite indeterminate: in such circumstances we should be confronted either with essences, related not even by a "bare 'and'", or with abstract forms having no content; and no definite issue could be raised. But we do assert propositions and we do raise determinate issues, and this in itself indicates that the relegation of either matter or form or both to the field of language or ideas is contrary to experience; it is contrary, for example, to such a theory's being stated and its opposite criticised, whatever other problems it may appear to solve.

The impossibility of denying the objectivity of logic can be amply illustrated by theories of definition, in which, also, the most striking lapses into nominalism occur. When theorists say that definition is always of names they are not restricting them to so-called "ostensive definitions" in which we say a word and point to an object. Rather they have a view resembling Mill's: "The simplest and most correct notion of a definition is a proposition declamatory of the meaning of a word."<sup>31</sup>

The most substantial argument Mill brings against the view that definitions are not necessarily of names is that on this view false conclusions can be validly deduced from true premises. Thus, he says, it must be admitted that "A dragon is a serpent breathing flame" is a correct definition; but if we take it to be a definition of things we have the two premises, "A dragon is a thing which breathes flame" and "A dragon is a serpent", from which we may conclude: "Some serpents breathe flame."<sup>32</sup>

But Mill overlooks the point that if there were no things corresponding to the word "dragon" the supporters of "real" definition would not be obliged to assert or accept "A dragon is a serpent breathing flame" as a definition. They would maintain that, since there are no dragons, the *thing* to be defined here is not dragon but the word "dragon", so that

<sup>31</sup> Op. cit., I, viii, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Op. cit., I, viii, 5.

the definition could take the form: "The word 'dragon' is the name given by some people to serpents which (they take or imagine to) breathe flame." Here name may be taken as the genus and the remainder of the definition as the differentia: in that way the definition has the form of the definitions which can be given of other things, and the definition of names comes under the general logical theory of the definition of things or terms; and, of course, if this definition is correct it will not imply false propositions any more than any other definition will. In fact, it is only because Mill begins with a sentence that does not signify a proposition that his argument has any plausibility.

Mill's other objection to the view that definitions are of things (not necessarily of names) is even less plausible. It attempts to show that definitions cannot be used as premises of arguments and hence are not ordinary propositions. The sentences, "A centaur is a man-bodied horse" and "A triangle is a rectilineal figure with three sides", he maintains, are precisely similar in form, "although in the former it is not implied that anything conformable to the term exists while in the latter it is". This point, he thinks, may be brought out by substituting "means" for "is" in both assertions, when it becomes apparent that the meaning of the first is unchanged but that the force of the second is lost, since it could not now figure as a premise in geometry whereas at first it could.<sup>33</sup>

Here Mill fails to see that if the first form of sentence "implies" that something corresponding to the word "triangle" exists the form of the second equally "implies" that something corresponding to the word "centaur" exists (because the form of both sentences is the same); there is no more reason, then, for taking both sentences to be concerned with names than there is for changing the form of the first sentence in order to show that it *is* concerned with names. Unless Mill is prepared to make such a change in the form of "A centaur is a man-bodied horse" he is involved in nominalism, in

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<sup>33</sup> Loc. cit.

confusing symbol and symbolised, because such a sentence suggests by its form that it is about the meaning of the name "centaur" when, in fact, it is about the name.

The notion of linguistic definition, then, presupposes a general theory of logical definition; and similar difficulties will arise in any theory that attempts to reduce logical features to linguistic features. Whatever similarities there are between the grammatical functions of words and sentences on the one hand, and the logical functions of propositions and their constituents on the other, the two studies are quite distinct, although logic is more fundamental because it applies to both the linguistic and the non-linguistic and makes possible the derivative study of the "formal" features of language, viz. grammar.

#### ADDENDUM.

In this paper I have been concerned with sketching in broad outline what I take to be the "nominalist error". The nominalist treatment of implication was too large a topic to be treated in any detail. But it seems to me that the view that there is a "proper" sense of "implies" which is not just a matter of linguistic convention is, for the reasons commonly given, irrefutable: the discussion of any hypothesis, even a hypothesis about implication, requires that those engaged in the discussion recognise the difference between "following from" and "not following from" as quite objective relations between facts; otherwise proof and testing are impossible.

It is true that some forms of implication, e.g. immediate implications, such as obversion, have the appearance of being mere linguistic substitutions that have no basis in the forms of situations. Nevertheless, we do recognise a difference between, for example, *He is either a fool or a knave* and *He is not both non-foolish and non-knavish*, a difference that is not confined to the mode of linguistic expression, but which is required to explain it. If these expressions were regarded as having precisely the same meaning it would be quite impossible to say why on one occasion we prefer the one



mode of expression, and on another occasion the other; for we certainly do not make our choice merely because of the aesthetic or some other such excellence of the one set of words.

Those who deny the difference are, of course, denying the difference between the affirmation of a disjunction of terms and the denial of the conjunction of their opposites. But it is perfectly obvious to me that while such expressions are equivalent, their form and their constituents are quite different and there is no more reason for saying that " $P$  or  $Q$ " and "not (non- $P$  and non- $Q$ )" have the same meaning than there is for saying that " $2 + 2$ " and " $-2 \times -2$ " have the same meaning. To proceed in such a fashion would amount to denying the reality of intension in favour of extension.

The solution of the other problems of implication, problems that centre around the connexion between implication and other relations of a similar type, so far as I know has not been furthered by anyone as a result of his taking up a nominalist position; and, for the reasons given, I do not see how it could be. In fact, a strict nominalist in logic could not begin to discuss without departing from his principal thesis.

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## REVIEW ARTICLE

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### Economics and Ethics

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By BENJAMIN HIGGINS

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THIS book<sup>1</sup> is a debate between Frank H. Knight, formerly Professor of Economics and now Professor of the Social Sciences in Chicago University, and Thornton W. Merriam, Director of U.S.O. Training National Council of the Y.M.C.A., formerly Chairman of the Board of Religion at Northwestern University. The book has a joint introduction by both authors, followed by five chapters on "Liberalism and Christianity" by Professor Knight, seven chapters on "Economic Ideals of Liberal Christianity" by Mr. Merriam, a chapter by Knight criticising Merriam's essay, and a chapter by Merriam criticising Knight.

The introductory chapter defines the major issue between the authors as "the relation between religion or Christianity and Liberalism" (p. 1). Knight regards Christianity and Liberalism as conflicting, Merriam considers them harmonious. This difference in opinion, it is pointed out, could result from:

- (1) A divergence in actual intellectual positions.
- (2) Different interpretations of Christianity.
- (3) Different interpretations of Liberalism.

The authors are more or less agreed on the concept of liberalism, and both "accept the ideals of maximum liberty for individuals as the main criterion of the rightness of political institutions and policies" (p. 6). They disagree, however, as to the extent to which maximum liberty is to be achieved through government action. The interpretation of

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<sup>1</sup>THE ECONOMIC ORDER AND RELIGION. By Frank H. Knight and Thornton W. Merriam. London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1948, pp. viii + 221.

Christianity shows greater divergence. Knight emphasises the scriptural and historical concepts of Christianity; Merriam regards Christianity as a dynamic movement which cannot be defined merely in terms of scriptures or the historical role of the Church. Any controversy between the authors not traceable to these two differences in interpretation arises from a real intellectual disagreement.

It is tempting to sum up the differences between the two authors by saying that one of them is an economist but no Christian, while the other is a Christian but no economist. Such a summary would not be grossly inaccurate; the divergence in view does reflect differences in training and approach. Knight's discussion is for the most part coldly scientific, and shows throughout the skilful use of the historical and analytical tools of the social scientist's craft. Merriam's chapters reveal warm goodheartedness, a strong desire to improve the world, a good deal of sound common sense, and some keen observations on social behaviour; but they also reflect the lack of any systematic analytical framework for his ideas. But such an epigrammatic characterization of the dispute would be an over-simplification. Some of the differences arise from the somewhat peculiar nature of Knight's economics, and others from the highly individual nature of Merriam's Christianity. On some points Merriam proves the better economist, while on other points Knight appears as the more learned Christian.

Knight makes four major points: first, the Christian church has in the past played a reactionary role, which bodes ill for any hope that it will provide leadership in future social reform; second, the Christian ethic does not in any case provide a guide to social action; third, there are sharp conflicts between Christian ethics and liberal ideals; fourth, liberal ideals can be best achieved in an economy that approximates as closely as possible the 19th century concept of *laissez faire*.

Knight begins his demonstration of the reactionary nature of religion by submitting evidence regarding primitive



religions. "The essential point for our purpose", Knight argues, "is that the function of religion in primitive society is to force conformity to tribal custom as it is, and not to improve or change its content" (p. 10). He then reviews the historical role of the Church in social and economic revolutions. "In all these revolutions", Knight contends, "the 'church', or the new churches, remained fundamentally reactionary. Religion opposed tooth and nail every phase of what we call progress, particularly intellectual advance". The original Christian social morality emphasised obedience; in the sole reference to economic behaviour in the Gospels, Jesus commands his listeners to "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's". The true embodiment of Christian social ideals, Knight maintains, is Medievalism.<sup>1</sup>

Merriam's view of Christian political economy is just the reverse of Knight's. He stresses the revolutionary aspects of Christianity: "There is social dynamite in the gospels". Jesus came not to bring peace but a sword; he denounced riches with vehemence; only by caring for his neighbour and helping the poor and dispossessed could a man be prepared for the Kingdom of God, which early Christians expected to be established as a future state on this earth (pp. 123-127). In his reply to Knight, Merriam asks, "Did any religion ever get started except as a protest against some type of established thought and behaviour?" (p. 205). He doubts whether there is such a thing in American Society as an "established" or "accepted" view for the Church to support: "Is there an established view", he asks, "regarding the New Deal, or divorce, or free enterprise, or anti-semitism, or how Negroes should be treated, or the validity of the Sacraments?" (204).

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<sup>1</sup> This particular point was made in more forceful terms in Knight's earlier essay on "Ethics and Economic Reform", *Economica*, February and November, 1939. He pointed out there that "The epistles repeatedly enjoin obedience and respect to political rulers, and command servants to be obedient and respectful to their recognised masters. This last injunction appears in at least a half-dozen places in as many Books in the New Testament. The word for 'servant' covers, if it does not specifically mean, slaves, and it is a familiar fact that the Church never condemned or officially opposed slavery" (p. 400).

He finds it difficult "to think of the blood of the martyrs as having been shed, or the punishment taken by religiously motivated anti-slavery groups . . . because these individuals or groups were following the accepted social line".

The reviewer is not in a position to settle this particular dispute. It would seem to arise partly out of the difference in interpretation of "Christianity" noted above: Knight thinks mainly of the historical role of the Christian church, Merriam thinks of the potential force of the initial Christian idea. The reviewer would agree with Knight that the Christian church has been on balance a reactionary force; certainly, differences in viewpoint with regard to the New Deal—as any Marxist would hasten to point out—is no proof that the Christian church hasn't generally favoured the established economic system. On the other hand, the reviewer would agree with Merriam that the Christian *idea*, pushed to its logical extreme, would be a very revolutionary idea indeed. If Jesus were to visit the United States today, and talk as he did in Jerusalem 2000 years ago, he would soon be in difficulties with the Committee on Un-American Activities!<sup>1</sup>

Knight's second point is deduced from his first. Since the Christian church taught that the existing social and economic order should be accepted, Christianity contains no principles for social reform. "The little that historical teaching has to say about economic life relates to 'wealth' and is superficial and indefensible" (p. 37). The indiscriminate giving recommended by early Christians would demoralise the recipient, and if kept up would take society back to barbarism.

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<sup>1</sup> In his preface to *Androcles and the Lion*, George Bernard Shaw interprets Jesus' teaching as advocacy of both Communism and Free Love. He concludes from this interpretation that "Decidedly, whether you think Jesus was God or not, you must admit that he was a first-rate political economist". In his concluding notes, Shaw says "In this play I have presented one of the Roman persecutions of the early Christians, not as the conflict of a false theology with a true, but as what all such persecutions essentially are: an attempt to suppress a propaganda that seemed to threaten the interests involved in the established law and order, organized and maintained in the name of religion and justice by politicians who are pure opportunist Have-and-Holders." . . . "In short, a Christian martyr was thrown to the lions not because he was a Christian, but because he was a crank; that is, an unusual sort of person."

In the modern world, where the common man participates fully in political life, endeavouring to solve social problems by loving God and man is merely shirking responsibilities. Neither love nor the Golden Rule shed any significant light on the problems of organised social relations (pp. 35-39). Good will, Knight insists, is considerably less important than understanding. "The great moral tragedy of life", he believes, "isn't that people fail to act in accordance with their ideals, . . . but that love is blind, that goodness, good intentions and good people so commonly do harm instead of good, because of failure to understand social and other conditions and the consequences of action" (p. 41). To the Christian, Knight contends, it was necessary only to have the right heart and spirit; little was said for being of the right mind. In Knight's opinion, this emphasis is entirely misplaced. "If civilisation is destroyed, it will be through misdirected effort to make it better, and not through passive indifference or deliberate rejection . . ." (p. 57). "Idealistic reformers are perhaps a greater menace than are outright criminals, partly because idealism is usually combined with excessive self-confidence, a righteous pose and ambition for place and power" (p. 100).

If Knight stresses the importance of knowing what to do, Merriam stresses the importance of wishing to do the right thing. "It is not enough to know what is right: the *desire* is equally important" (p. 207). In Merriam's opinion, Christianity has a great deal of socio-economic content. Churches, he insists, cannot ignore economic questions, precisely because of the ethical nature of Christianity. "What love of God means in terms of the actualities of an economic society is a question which every generation of Christians must face" (p. 105). In his view, true Christians must be militant social reformers. "Christian social and economic action has at long last arrived", and "the Christian sentiment of love may well prove to be as tough as the situation demands". Christianity "presents the challenge of building a world community based on the principles of equality, freedom and



collective responsibility". He asks "What kind of economic organisation accepts such goals?". Unless Christianity provides an answer to this question, it "isn't entitled to serious consideration as a social ethic since it would then fail modern man at the point of his most serious confusion. An ethic without economic implications is no ethic".

Merriam then outlines a dozen "economic intentions of Christianity": to bring the economic system under the control of socialised purposes democratically evolved; to strengthen the motive of community responsibility, and welfare, and to weaken the motive of individual gain; to support and extend labour organisation (the labour movement being "at bottom an educational movement based on essential Christian ideals"); to help develop social planning to eliminate depression, stagnation, unemployment, want amid plenty; to establish sound economic and cultural bases for rural life; to make political and government agencies effective bodies for dealing with economic questions; to secure the most general distribution of the essentials of life for all citizens; to support consumers' co-operatives; to eliminate economic injustice to the Negroes; to place international business on a level of genuine concern for liberty, equality and justice for men everywhere; to encourage co-operation of business men, politicians, political scientists and ethicists on problems requiring a combination of technical knowledge and Christian social philosophy; to direct the world-wide aspiration for better living conditions towards an understanding of the Kingdom of God; and, finally, to break down the misconception that the spiritual and material are distinct entities and that religion is primarily concerned with the spiritual.

Merriam's program is an ambitious one. Its similarity to the expressed aims of the New Deal in the United States will be apparent to anyone familiar with the American political and economic scene of the late 1930's. Universal acceptance of Merriam's definition of "Christian intention" would make it impossible for anyone opposing the New Deal

program to call himself a Christian. This attitude of Merriam's might be quite right and proper, but one wonders whether it would be supported by everyone claiming some authority as a Christian ethicist. As Knight says in his criticism, Merriam's interpretation of Christianity "is more of the nature of a statement of his own ethical position than of argument for the view that his position is to be identified with that of Christianity or of religion. In a way characteristic of Christians, he practically assumes the identity of religion with Christianity. I don't think this is intellectually admissible, or perhaps entirely becoming" (p. 185).

Knight, claiming to be a liberal but not a Christian, finds guide posts to effective economic policy in liberalism, but not in Christianity. The religious view, he maintains, is that truth is to be found by faith. Liberalism repudiates the idea that truth is final or absolute; "all concrete beliefs are . . . subject to re-interpretation, revision, eventual rejection and replacement in the light of new knowledge or insight". To the liberal, truth itself has moral value; in liberal ethics intellectual integrity is the primary obligation of the person to himself, and to tell the truth his basic obligation to others. Science itself rests "on a high and austere morality" (p. 48) . . . . "Truth must be sought without knowing concretely for what one is searching; to view it as an end, given in advance, contradicts the idea of a problem" (p. 49). There is a basic dichotomy between liberal and Christian ethics. The historical Christian view stresses obedience to law and custom. The liberal believes in rule by law, but he also believes in co-operative participation in the effort to improve law and custom (p. 65).

It will be apparent from what has already been said that Merriam totally disagrees with this viewpoint, and would insist that liberalism and Christianity are very closely linked.

When Knight comes to translate his liberal philosophy into an economic program, one is irrepressibly reminded that Knight's significant contributions to economics were made

15 to 20 years ago. Knight is one of those neo-classical economists who reacted to the "Keynesian revolution" with such profound distaste that he never really understood it. For this reason, Knight's political economy has a distinctly old-fashioned ring. He even refers to "Protectionism in international trade" as "the dominant economic issue in all modern politics" (p. 77). One would think that all the bitter controversy over the New Deal in the United States, the labour party programs in the United Kingdom and Australia, and the social democratic programs of Norway and Sweden, all the debates over roads to full employment without inflation, over social security, planning for national development, and the like, had never taken place. Moreover, Knight denies that there is such a thing as basic economic conflict. "Reflection will reveal", he confidently asserts, "that it is rather an accident that internal social conflict takes economic form . . . . It is probable that the necessity of economic activity and co-operation actually reduces social conflict on the whole" (p. 78). "The major social problems . . . do not arise out of economic conflict", but "are rooted in social and activity interests of the sort involved in play and culture" (p. 98). He cites as an example of essential community of interest in economic policy the fact that practically no one profits by the business cycle! Remedial action, he says, is "a matter of scientific understanding" (p. 84). He completely misses the essential point that among the many routes to full employment without inflation some are more favourable to Big Business, while others are more favourable to Big Labour or to Big Agriculture, and that consequently the most bitter conflicts between economic groups can arise over anti-depression policy.

Given his belief in the essential harmony of economic interests, it is not surprising that Knight's positive program consists of a return to *laissez-faire*. "A perfectly competitive economy", he says, "would realise for each individual the ideal combination of freedom and efficiency" (p. 82). Poverty is always with us and individual freedom from poverty is possible only for a few, through inequality and exploitation.



General poverty can be reduced only by more efficient use of resources, and through capital accumulation and improved technique (p. 79). Little can be accomplished through mere redistribution. "It is an essential fact", Knight roundly asserts, "that on the average, entrepreneurs' losses equal or exceed their gains . . . . Statistical investigation discloses no aggregate net profit over substantial periods of time as a share in the social distribution"<sup>1</sup> (p. 82). In any case, Knight argues, social abolition of profit would require a collectivist state, which must be a dictatorship. Knight's own program is "to make competition work . . . by dealing with the business cycle and predatory monopoly and other evils" (p. 96). In accordance with the views of nineteenth century liberals, Knight seems to feel that his end can be achieved merely by passing appropriate laws with regard to combinations in restraint of trade, public utilities, taxation, and money and banking. He does, however, give grudging support to social insurance as a remedy for any "remaining insecurity" after the other laws are passed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A statement as startling as this should have been supported by the results of the "statistical investigation" to which Knight refers. If net profit is defined in the usual "social accounting" sense, of dividends, interest, rents and entrepreneurial withdrawals, Knight's statement is palpable nonsense. If he means something different, he should have done his readers the service of providing his definition of "net profit". Even if net profit is very narrowly defined so as to include only dividends and entrepreneurial withdrawals, Knight's statement is extremely doubtful. It is doubtful whether even in depression entrepreneurs as a class have "negative incomes" in any useful sense of the term. Even if one deducts capital consumption from entrepreneurs' incomes, it seems probable on the face of it that entrepreneurial incomes over the cycle as a whole would not only be positive, but substantial.

<sup>2</sup> Knight is much less critical of laissez-faire here than he was in his earlier essay on *The Ethics of Competition* (London, 1935). He then stated baldly that "in the conditions of real life no possible social order based upon a *laissez faire* policy can justify the familiar ethical conclusions of apologetic economics" (p. 49) and proceeded to elaborate this statement over many pages. In the present essay he does admit that his argument does not support the conclusion that "the actual system is ethically ideal", because "perfect competition is not present in real life" and because "the evils imputed to the economic order, especially inequality and injustice, are by no means due merely to the failure of market competition". But he seems to do so grudgingly, and he leaves the impression that he considers a laissez-faire economy, with an "appropriate" institutional framework, the best of all possible worlds.

Small wonder that Merriam is revolted by this passive approach to economic problems. "If liberal values depend on the restoration of the free market", Merriam retorts, "then in my opinion, we may as well bid farewell to these values". The reviewer heartily agrees. The proponents of a return to *laissez faire* grossly underestimate the political and economic problems involved in creating by law anything vaguely resembling the perfectly competitive economy, the efficacy of which is the sole foundation of the *laissez faire* economic philosophy. It is worth remembering what perfect competition entails. It means that no firm, farmer, or worker, and no organisation of firms, farmers, and workers is large or powerful enough to affect in the slightest degree the price of anything it buys or sells; that the price of every commodity and every factor of production is adjusted immediately to any change in demand for it or cost of it. The proposal to return to *laissez-faire*, in Knight's sense of legislating perfect competition, is "conservative" in wishing to return to rule by law instead of rule by government, business, and labour bureaucrats; but it is radical in the extreme in terms of the revolution in economic organisation that would be needed to implement the proposal.

Merriam's own program is a good deal more extensive: the building of a world community based on the principles of equality, freedom and co-operative responsibility. If there are children in our society who have inadequate food, demoralising home and community life, inadequate medical care or poor education, the principle of equality has not been fulfilled. The principle of collective responsibility requires control of large corporations rather than of individuals. It involves collective action by political agencies. "The need for adaptations in the governmental mechanism" to meet the basic economic needs of the people "is a major task confronting society today." Some curtailment of freedom is inevitable in performing this task. Citizens cannot be "free" to exploit others, and freedom must be redefined in terms of economic realities.

Merriam, like other liberals, considers freedom of speech, public discussion, and criticism to be essential. However, in his opinion, "This highly important freedom must at times be limited to those who accept the basic values which society sets up as its goals" (p. 141). This statement would appear to mean that freedom to discuss goals of social organisation is *not* essential. If this criterion of freedom of speech were adopted, it would have to be conceded that Germany under the Nazis, Italy under the Fascists, and Russia under the Soviet régime all retained freedom of speech. Anyone accepting the official goals set up by the government was free to express his approval of the goals, and to discuss means of achieving them. True freedom of speech must surely grant the right to discuss objectives as well. It may, however, be consistent with liberalism to refuse freedom of speech to those who do not themselves believe in it. Perhaps this is what Merriam really means.

In common with most liberal social reformers, whose technical knowledge of economics is limited, the emphasis in Merriam's program is on greater equality. Inequality of the sort existing in the United States, he contends, "makes it impossible for a person who takes Christian ideas seriously to be complacent about the economic system" (146). He devotes several pages to elaboration of this theme, whereas unemployment is mentioned only once in his main essay, and is accorded two sentences in his critique of Knight's essay. Knight is properly critical of this distribution of emphasis. It is foolish, he says, to castigate business men for selfish and irresponsible opposition to reforms. The problem is a good deal more complex than bad behaviour of Big Business. Many of the reforms opposed by business men, Knight maintains, "are really vicious, while most of them are debatable" (p. 190). He might have added that Big Labour and Big Agriculture have also been known to oppose desirable reforms. Merriam "hardly refers to efficiency or progress" (p. 194) as necessary aspects of a rising standard of living. He confuses understanding with goodwill. For this reason Knight has mis-

givings about Merriam's proposal that the churches should take the initiative in pressing for economic reform. The idea has merit, Knight says, but involves several dangers. People may expect too much from the church, and may neglect more fundamental lines of attack on social problems. The beliefs of the church with regard to economic policy "become mischievous if the believer claims any knowledge of what God wills on any particular question" (p. 191). Merriam, Knight argues, assigns too generous a role to good intentions, in contrast with intellectual analysis. In his emphasis on redistribution he ignores the problem of economic incentive and the importance of making economic activity interesting (pp. 196-7).

Merriam points to a rift between business behaviour and Christian ethics, a rift which Knight has also stressed in his earlier writings. The schizophrenic nature of the "Christian" business man is certainly a significant factor in modern capitalist society. Especially in the United States, the "business is business and religion is something else" attitude involves business men in considerable moral conflict. It is so hard for the businessman to draw the precise line as to where business ends and ethics begin!<sup>1</sup> Merriam also points out a rift between economics and ethics, a rift which he considers unfortunate. The effort of the economist to be scientific, he says, has isolated economics from religion and from ethics. In order to achieve the alliance between economics and religion which Merriam considers a necessary foundation for good economic policy, economics must get rid of its "anti-intellectualism" in the field of values (p. 115).

But why should economists make recommendations for policy at all? If they content themselves with explaining economic phenomena, and analysing the effects of various policy proposals without judging them, couldn't they avoid value judgments altogether?

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<sup>1</sup> The significance of this conflict in American behaviour has been stressed by Gorer in his book *The Americans*.



The answer to this question is "no", for three rather different sorts of reasons. First, it is doubtful whether economists could make a useful selection of phenomena, or devise methods of dealing with them, without some kind of economic "problem" in mind. Can the reader think of a single major advance in economic knowledge that was not the result—directly or indirectly—of an effort to find the solution to a social "problem"? The major advances of the last twenty years have been the theory of imperfect and monopolistic competition, which developed out of an effort to solve the monopoly "problem", and the theory of income and employment determination, which arose from the endeavour to solve the "problem" of unemployment. Once economists say that monopoly and unemployment are "problems", for which solutions should be sought, the value judgments have been made. In other words, value judgments inform analysis. It would be possible, of course, to scrap the value judgments and keep the scientific principles after the analysis is finished; but some value judgments are necessary to get started.

Second, if analysis is undertaken, policy implications are inevitable. Are economists to form a secret society, and reveal their results only to each other, under oath of secrecy? If not, someone will reveal the policy implications of economic analysis and make propaganda of them. Government policy is always based on some kind of economic theory; and it might as well be based on correct economic theory. If economists do not interpret the policy implications of their own analysis, their scientific conclusions are liable to gross misinterpretation, either because they are imperfectly understood or because particular individuals or groups wish to use them unscrupulously for their own purposes.

Finally, economics is an Art as well as a science, and economists are people as well as scientists. Most economists, as people and as practitioners of the Art of economics, really believe the two basic ethical premises. If they believe them, it is obvious that they are *morally* obliged to make recommendations for policy. Once it is believed that it is good for

people to be happy, and that increased consumption of goods and services (including leisure) contributes to happiness, the conclusion is inescapable that current economic problems are far too pressing to be neglected, or left to laymen to solve. As well ask the medical doctor why he makes prescriptions, instead of confining himself to diagnosis and prognosis, as to ask the economist why he succumbs to the temptation to formulate policy!

There is, of course, no room for value judgments in economic *analysis*. An economist who allows a conviction that usury is wicked to influence his analysis of the determination of interest rates, or who permits his feeling that socialism is a creation of the Devil to colour his analysis of public investment planning, is a bad economist. The value judgments must be kept in their proper place—in the open, and in the “ante-room” of the office in which the economist performs his diagnosis and prognosis of social maladies, and makes prescriptions for their cure.

The kind of ethical framework needed to make possible the attainment of politico-economic objectives is an issue entirely separate from the isolation of ethical premises of economic analysis. Indeed, this latter question isn't really a matter of ethics at all; it is a question of economic and political fact. Conceivably, an economic system could be devised that would achieve all economic and political objectives of society, irrespective of the prevailing system of ethics; is there such a system?

No actual system has ever approximated the economic objectives enumerated above. Consequently, economists have always been critical of the economic systems in which they lived; they have considered it not merely their right, but their duty to be critical. Adam Smith, too often remembered for his advocacy of laissez-faire and his statements regarding the “invisible hand” that guides individuals in the pursuit of their selfish interests to foster social ends, was in fact an economic interventionist of the first order. Smith approved legal limitations on profits, minimum wage legislation, pro-

gressive income tax, price ceilings on necessities, smashing of monopolies, curtailment of exploitation by landlords, and extension of public enterprise to fields of social importance which are not, or should not be allowed to become, profitable for private enterprise. As Professor Schumpeter of Harvard has aptly phrased it, "If we analyze his argument closely, it amounts to all-round vituperation directed against 'slothful' landlords and grasping merchants or 'masters'."<sup>1</sup>

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, social criticism by "orthodox" economists was at a low ebb. The lapse of "vituperation" was partly the result of admiration for the rapid improvement in living standards that capitalism brought between 1850 and 1913, partly a reaction to the "fuzziness" of much of the socialist criticism, and partly the product of a childish delight in the elegance and symmetry of their pure theory of pure competition, which was too seldom contrasted with the real world in which they were living.<sup>1</sup> Of course, even the "liberal" economists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were interventionists in considerable degree; they insisted on elimination of monopoly of all kinds and rigorous control of the credit mechanism. But most of them felt that the shortcomings of the capitalist system could be remedied by passing and enforcing the right laws, especially anti-trust, banking, and tax laws.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Schumpeter, "Keynes, The Economist", in S. E. Harris (ed.) *The New Economics*, New York, 1947, p. 99.

It was Adam Smith, after all, who said, "People of the same trade seldom meet together even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices" (*The Wealth of Nations*, ch. x), that "Masters are always and everywhere in a sort of tacit, but constant and uniform, combination, not to raise wages above their actual rate . . . Masters, too, sometimes enter into particular combinations to sink the wages of labour even below this rate" (op. cit., ch. viii), and that "Our merchants and master-manufacturers . . . are silent with regard to the pernicious effects of their own gains. They complain only of those of other people" (op. cit., ch. ix).

<sup>1</sup> As R. G. Hawtrey, economist to the Bank of England, has put it, "Economic faith was better established at the beginning of the twentieth century than it had ever been". It was the principle, "so intelligible, so convincing, so universally applicable" that free competition would assure a maximum of material happiness, "that inspired the economists of the nineteenth century with faith" ("The Need for Faith", *Economic Journal*, September, 1946, p. 354).

These bright dreams were shattered by the events of the last thirty years. The succession of war, inflation, depression, war and inflation has been too sharp a contrast to accepted objectives of economic policy for anyone to feel complacent about the functioning of our western social systems. Moreover, the revolutions in economic thought during the 1930's destroyed any illusions about the facility with which these objectives could be attained. The theory of monopolistic competition, developed in the decade after 1931, has shown all too conclusively that "pure competition" is the exception rather than the rule, that the prevalence of monopoly is likely to increase rather than diminish,<sup>2</sup> and that the presumed benefits of competition were largely confined to the textbooks. The theory of employment developed since 1936 has shown equally clearly why full employment without inflation is also the exception rather than the rule, why economic fluctuations are more apt to increase than to diminish in amplitude and are more likely to take place around a higher than a lower average column of unemployment in future. If there is any inherent tendency towards equilibrium at all in a mature capitalist economy, it is probably the tendency for a depressed economy to go on "bumping along the bottom", rather than for a prosperous economy to remain serenely fully employed.

It is now recognised that, far from providing the harmony of interests assumed in laissez-faire theory, the economic system is a mass of conflicts. Under present conditions, for example, an increase in wages must either lead to a rise in prices at the expense of consumers, or a decline in profits; and if the fall in profits leads to reduced production, consumers will suffer anyway. An improvement in the workers' share of national income is practically impossible without widespread and rigorous price controls, which business men dislike. The more closely full employment is approximated,

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<sup>2</sup> As Professor Knight puts it, "No error is more egregious than that of confounding freedom with free competition . . . Under freedom all that would stand in the way of a universal drift toward monopoly is the fortunate limitations of human nature" (*The Ethics of Competition*, op. cit., p. 52).



the more difficult it becomes to avoid inflation. High profits for business can be obtained by restricting output and rising prices, at the expense of consumers, as well as by enterprise and efficiency. High wages can be obtained by strikes, at the expense of everyone, as well as by high productivity. High agricultural prices can be obtained by burning coffee or dumping melons in the river. Export subsidies to help alleviate the dollar shortage will add to inflationary pressure. Big business tends to protest against large government deficits in depression; but the more government expenditures are covered by current reserves, the larger total expenditures must be to offset a given volume of unemployment. Inflationary trends call for high taxes on personal and business income; but if personal income taxes go far enough down the income scale to be effective in checking consumer spending, the incentive for workers may be reduced, output per man hour may fall, and inflation will be aggravated; while if taxes are concentrated on business and on the higher income groups, the incentive for expansion and improvement of plant and equipment, so essential to the ultimate elimination of shortages, may be destroyed. And so on.

These inherent conflicts find expression in the political arena. The political struggle in democratic countries is less a battle among political parties as such than a battle among the "Big Three"—Big Business, Big Labour, and Big Agriculture—all trying to bring pressure to bear on "Big Government", in order to obtain legislation favourable to their own group.

But could harmony be produced by a complete overhaul of the economic system? Some laissez faire economists and some Marxists have thought so. Careful analysis, however, indicates that neither communism nor laissez faire, nor indeed any kind of economic system, will in itself guarantee the achievement of our politico-economic objectives, irrespective of the ethical framework. Present-day communism would almost certainly fail to achieve these ends. The frictionless, classless anarchy has ethical attractions, but for modern com-

munists this is a very long-run goal indeed. Meanwhile the communist state is to be subjected to a "dictatorship of the proletariat", which, in practice, would almost certainly mean dictatorship by the leaders of the revolutionary movement and their successors. These leaders would be unlikely to achieve the stated goals because:

(a) Few of them have any conception of the complexities of economic planning in a socialistic state, and since they swallow the wrong with the right in Marxist economics and reject all other economics, they are ill-equipped to deal with these complexities. (They may nevertheless run an economy better than it is being run now; but they would not run it as well as it *could* be run.)

(b) Few of them really accept the "freedoms" of Western democracy as desirable ends. They want "freedom" only for people who agree with them. (Most people do, and in the United States today we see an organised effort to curtail freedom; but even in the United States today there seems to be more freedom for the opposition than there is in the U.S.S.R.)

(c) They are motivated as much by hatred and desire for revenge as by love, and would consequently tend to destroy much that is useful or desirable in present society. As Professor Knight puts it, "if the gospel of love will not solve our problems we must admit the fact and turn from it in sorrow, but we can both confidently and joyfully reject the gospel of hate".<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, a return to complete laissez faire, in the sense of complete lack of government intervention in the economic sphere, would almost certainly make economic con-

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<sup>1</sup>F. H. Knight, "Ethics and Economic Reform 11: Idealism and Marxism", *Economica*, August, 1939, p. 308. Knight is unjustly critical of Marxist economics, however. He writes in the same passage: "Sombart has somewhere remarked that Marx was a man of two souls, a thinker and a hater; I should say that as a hater he was undoubtedly entitled to a very high rank . . . Marxism is not merely a romantic over-simplification; it is intellectually self-contradictory and ethically nihilistic and monstrous".

ditions worse rather than better. Complete *laissez faire*, of course, never existed; and a movement in that direction would be completely counter to current trends. With the growth of technical knowledge and managerial skill, the most efficient size of firm gets bigger and bigger. Labour and agriculture are becoming increasingly aware of the advantages of collective bargaining. As noted above, to reproduce conditions of pure competition—which alone made *laissez-faire* even appear ethically conscionable—and still retain the advantages of large-scale organisation, would require an enormous degree of government intervention.

Mere *laissez faire*, in the sense of a “hands off” policy of government, would almost certainly make the income distribution worse, by removing such curbs to ruthless exploitation of superior bargaining positions as now exist. The removal of restraints on monopolies would worsen the allocation of resources as well. As for full employment without inflation, there is little reason to suppose that “*laissez-faire*” capitalism would work better in the future than it has in the past, and there are very good reasons for supposing that it would work worse, with the weakening of the forces of capitalist expansion: population growth is tapering off, frontiers are disappearing, innovations are becoming capital-releasing rather than capital-absorbing; outlets for investment are growing less fast than before, while personal and institutional savings continue to grow as fast as ever. The result is a chronic tendency in advanced countries towards excess savings and under-employment, interrupted only by inflationary booms—and even these are largely confined to war and immediate postwar periods. Economic progress is also stultified by chronic under-employment, by misdirection of investment in inflation, and by waste of resources through short-run planning for individual gain, as distinct from long-run planning for net social advantage.

From the technical point of view, a “mixed economic system”, in which a certain amount of continuous government

management of the economy is undertaken, while large areas of economic choice are left to the individuals and groups it governs, offers most hope of success. Such a mixed system, however, intensifies the inherent economic conflicts and the related political conflicts among major economic groups. And this conclusion brings us to our third question; for in the opinion of the reviewer the resolution of these conflicts requires extension of the basic concepts of Christian ethics to relationships among groups, as distinct from relationships among individuals.<sup>1</sup> What is needed, for example, is that no business man should be allowed to consider himself a "good Christian" merely because he restrains his drinking and flirtation on Saturday night and goes to church on Sunday, if on Monday he hires thugs to break up a picket line, or makes a price-fixing agreement with a rival firm, or organizes a lobby to press for tax-cuts in an inflationary period. He must be considered a sinner, not only by workers, but by other business men; and he must be taught to regard himself as immoral. Similarly, the trade union official who, in a period of critical shortages, calls a strike for wages out of all proportion to

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Boulding has put the case well in the final chapter of his *Economics of Peace* (New York, 1945). "In the last resort, the problem of responsible government is more than a political problem: it is a moral problem, affecting the thought and conduct of every individual—even the reader of this page. Responsible government, whether on a world scale or even on a national or local scale, can never develop unless there are responsible citizens. A society of selfish individuals might be able to get along, for the power of one individual to injure others is small, and Adam Smith's great 'hidden hand' comes into play to turn private interest into public good. But a society organized into selfish groups desperately needs the cement of responsible behaviour. This is partly because groups can injure each other, and injure society, more than individuals can. Partly, also, it is because men as representatives of a group are much less moral than as selfish individuals. Men will lie, cheat, steal and kill for their country, their class, their trade union, their business—even for their church—with a single mindedness of evil intent that they would never achieve as individuals. In our days more than even, then, when the individualistic society of a generation or two ago is being replaced by a highly collectivized society, organized into labor unions, employers' associations, corporations, and the like, it is necessary to develop on the part of individuals, and on the part of these member groups, a sense of responsibility for the welfare of all. In the internal strife of society as well as its external warfare only the principle of universal responsibility can insure peace."



labour productivity, must be treated as immoral by all groups in society. The farmer who, through his co-operative, withholds produce from the market when people are starving must be taught that *he* is a sinner; and so forth. As a concrete example, what is needed is more behaviour like that of the British Trades Unions Congress, in supporting the Labour Government's proposals for wage stops to relieve inflationary pressure.

In other words, the achievement of a "good" politico-economic situation requires the application of the "golden rule" to relationships between *groups*, as well as between persons. Whether or not a society guided by the principle of "doing unto others as you would be done by" in both personal and social ethics should for that reason alone be called "christian" is perhaps debatable. Knight would say no, Merriam would say yes. The reviewer is inclined to side with Merriam on this issue. It has long seemed curious to the reviewer that the concept of Christian ethics should have come to be restricted in practice to so narrow a range of purely interpersonal relationships. Christ himself seems to have been more concerned with social ethics than the Christian church—or at least its Protestant branch—is today. But the reviewer claims no special knowledge of Christianity.

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## REVIEWS

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CHILDHOOD AND AFTER. By Susan Isaacs. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948. Pp. 238. U.K. price, 15s.

This collection of Essays and Clinical Studies was selected by the late Susan Isaacs from her articles and addresses covering the period 1928 to 1945. Most of the papers deal with children, but some work relating mainly to adult cases is included, on the ground that "it is not possible to understand the adult without going back to the feelings, phantasies and experiences of the infant" (Preface).

Most of the material is presented in a non-technical manner and the work is notable for the clarity of its style and for the absence of extravagant claims as to the efficacy of the psycho-analytic approach to problems having their root in childhood experiences, or of any other method of dealing with the difficulties of children. In *The Mental Hygiene of the Pre-School Child* (1928) Mrs. Isaacs says: "the intelligent parent is asking for advice as to what he should do to avoid neurosis—if there is anything to be done; and here and there he meets with those who speak with no uncertain voice as to what should be done or left undone. Others of us who have had opportunities of studying both neurotic and normal children at close hand over a long period . . . are more sensible of the obscurities of the problem, and of the difficulties of laying down any broad body of clear and definite principles of certain prophylaxis, in the present state of our knowledge" (p. 1). In *Fatherless Children* (1945), a study of a problem arising particularly as a result of the war, Mrs. Isaacs states that "all we can hope to do, with the utmost of goodwill and understanding, is to help the child to accept that loss and find his way out of the conflict of feeling it arouses. Moreover, the child has to find his *own* way out. Just as children show their difficulties in different ways, so they will find different ways of overcoming them, whatever sort of help we may give" (p. 193). There is thus no suggestion that the analyst or educator can mould, or even direct, the child's development. Again, in *Rebellious and Defiant Children* (1934) we find this warning against wholly blaming parents for the troublesome behaviour of their children (*i.e.*, against assuming that anyone can treat children so as to avoid difficulties of all kinds): "the complexities of human nature itself set bounds to our hopes and aims and may make our children difficult even when we have the

best will in the world towards them. Not all our human wisdom and good will can avoid the conflict which arises inherently in the child's early and imaginative life."

An indication of what can be done to meet the child's difficulties is given in *The Educational Value of the Nursery School* (1937), which emphasises the child's need for satisfactory conditions in which to play with other children. The value of such schools lies in their being better able than most homes to supply space, materials for play, and companionship. It is clear that the nursery school is recommended as a place for playing, not for instruction. "If we were asked to mention one of the supreme psychological needs of the young child, the answer would have to be 'play'—the opportunity for free play in all its various forms. Play is the child's means of living, of understanding life . . . . He needs the opportunity for imaginative play, free and unhampered by adult limits and teachings" (p. 66). "[Make-believe play] not only helps him to solve intellectual problems in understanding the behaviour of things and people . . . but also helps him to achieve balance and harmony through the active expression of his inner world of feelings and impulses, and of the people that dwell in his inner world . . . [for example] the great, the terrible, the loving, the deserting parents" (p. 69).

Though the point is not explicitly made in this essay, it seems clear that the kind of nursery school which Mrs. Isaacs advocates is necessarily small. This is borne out by the fact that in *Children in Institutions* (1945) she advises the placing of children who must be removed from their own homes in environments which approximate as closely as possible to the home. "The young child", she states, "cannot make contact of feeling with large numbers of other children. He is at home only in a group of about the size of an ordinary large family. His feelings of trust and confidence are overwhelmed by anxiety in too large a group, whether of his own age or of different ages. Life in most institutions thus not only baulks the child of his natural experience of active play with his fellows, but stimulates his fear and distrust by keeping him constantly in the presence of children with whom he can have no active relationship" (p. 225). This point is important in view of the present widespread support for the establishment of nursery schools which, if the present conditions in infants' schools (catering for children from five years of age) are any indication of what is likely to occur, will, if the demand is acceded to, present many of the undesirable features of institutions. Infants' classes of sixty pupils are at present not unusual: if this kind of provision is extended to cover children of even lower age it is unlikely to prove of psychological value to the

children, whatever advantages it may have from the point of view of parents or of industry. The kind of nursery school described by Mrs. Isaacs must necessarily be expensive, in view of the space, material and staffing required. And if herding is resorted to as an economic necessity the benefits of free play and skilled supervision are lost.

An indication of the complexity of psychological problems is provided in *Privation and Guilt* (1929), in which Mrs. Isaacs develops Ernest Jones's theory that privation is equivalent to frustration and that guilt is "as it were artificially built up for the purpose of protecting the child from the stress of privation . . . by damping down the wishes that are not destined to be gratified". She concludes that guilt is inevitable in the human mind (since privation is inevitable), that it arises from developmental processes themselves, not from accidental circumstances or faulty education. This conclusion is supported by her consideration of privation and guilt in connection with such processes as weaning and training in cleanliness.

The complexity of psychological traits is again brought out in *Property and Possessiveness* (1935), which challenges the "crude psychological theory which uses a simple 'instinct of acquisitiveness' as an explanatory notion for adult behaviour" (p. 45). In order to understand acquisitiveness, either in a child or in an adult, it is necessary to understand the child's attitude to property. To begin with, property has little value to children apart from what other children are wanting. "What is so desperately desired may be wanted simply because someone else has it or desires it" (p. 39). "I do not believe that the relation between a person and a physical object . . . is ever a simple affair between a person and a thing. The object is a pawn in the game, an instrument for controlling and defining the relation between them. It may be a symbol of a significant bodily part of one or both of them" (p. 36). The child's attitude to a gift, again, is significant: "The gift is not only a sign that the giver loves and does not hate: it is also a sign that the *recipient* is believed to be loving, not hating or hateful" (p. 40). To be able to give, on the other hand, is, to the child, to be safe and powerful, to be (on the level of the unconscious) the omnipotent parent. Ownership thus comes to be related with motives of power and rivalry, guilt and love (p. 41).

In *Recent Advances in the Psychology of Young Children* (1938) the complexity of behaviour is again discussed in connection with the difficulties inherent in the statistical method of psychological research. "The 'accidents of environment', which are ruled out for such studies, may really be the significant elements for the particular child" (p. 80).



One investigator found that manifestations of sympathy, co-operation, fear or aggressiveness were "valid only at the time the test was made and in the situation observed: there is no way of arriving at a general trait of aggressiveness or sympathy or co-operation" (p. 81). "One boy, who is excited and aggressive when another particular boy is there, is not so when that boy is absent. Again, when a child has done something to cause distress to others, then his attitude towards that distress will be different from what it is when he has not been the cause of the distress" (p. 82). Mrs. Isaacs comments that objective experimenters are apparently beginning to approximate to the "clinical" viewpoint, in which the whole personality, in its relation to its environment, is considered instead of confining themselves to statistical work on isolated types of behaviour. In other words, the "objective" experimenters are, if Mrs. Isaacs is right, beginning to realize that collections of figures purporting to relate to "single" traits are not very illuminating. Psychology cannot be reduced to calculations about the occurrence of certain "elements" in behaviour, because behaviour is not reducible to elements. All that can be studied is how people act in certain complex situations, the behaviour itself being, of course, complex. This conclusion may be disappointing to those who hope to make psychology an "exact science", but the fact remains that no science can be more "exact" than its data, and if single traits do not exist, no matter how exact may be the calculations made on the assumption that they do, the results must be faulty.

It may be noted, also, that the distinction between "objective" and "clinical" points of view is invalid. It is not more "objective" to note that a child is "inhibited" than to note that he is unresponsive in a laboratory situation and emotionally expressive in the school-yard.

In the same essay Mrs. Isaacs deals with advances in the technique of psycho-analysis, emphasizing that what the analyst has to discover is "the meaning of the child's experiences to himself" (p. 84). The analyst, as distinct from the experimentalists ("objective" or "qualitative" psychologists) is concerned not merely to record the existence of a certain form of behaviour and to see how often it occurs, but to understand *why* it occurs in particular situations. As such explanations cannot be statistically verified, since no two cases will be identical, the question arises as to how they can be verified at all. This problem is considered in *Criteria for Interpretation* (1939), where it is stated that the acid test of the correctness of the analyst's explanation of behaviour is the patient's reaction to it. If the explanation is incorrect it will interfere with the analysis, rendering the patient unco-operative, or perhaps, if the error is persistent, will lead to the patient's breaking off the analysis altogether. Correct inter-

pretation, on the other hand, will cause the patient to become more communicative.

With this is connected the question of what the analysis aims to do. The essay *Modifications of the Ego through the Work of Analysis* denies the notion that the analyst's work is to dominate the patient's ego, to impose upon the patient the analyst's own values or beliefs, or even "to strengthen the patient's ego". The strengthening of the ego does occur, but by its becoming more independent through the experiences of the transference situation. The analyst does not take an omnipotent attitude, but enables the patient, by understanding his own motives, to solve his problems. What the analyst has to do is to understand and interpret, not to direct or judge.

Mrs. Isaacs adds the important comment that it is not only the unsatisfactory or abnormal traits which require analysis: the "normal" and satisfactory may also have unconscious roots and, in fact, must do so, if the theory of "sublimation" is correct.

The remaining essays, *A Special Mechanism in a Schizoid Boy* (1939), *Temper Tantrums in Early Childhood and their Relation to Internal Objects* (1940), and *An Acute Psychotic Anxiety Occurring in a Boy of Four Years* (1943) illustrate the technique of analysis and support some of the statements made elsewhere in the book. Some of the interpretations here seem open to question, particularly those which rest on the notion of the "castration complex": the account of the analyses is not sufficiently detailed to show how far these interpretations were confirmed by the patients' reactions to them.

The essays are lucidly and interestingly written and the book is well produced. The collection should prove of value to those concerned with the psychological problems of children. For the most part it is readily intelligible to the non-specialist.

MARGARET MACKIE.

PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES: ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF L. SUSAN STEBBING.

Published for the Aristotelian Society by George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1948. Pp. 156. Price, 15s.

THIS is a volume of miscellaneous essays, extremely diverse in length, in subject, and in quality. Most of the essays make passing reference to Susan Stebbing's work, but only two of them, John Laird's *Reflections Occasioned by Ideals and Illusions* and A. C. Ewing's *Philosophical Analysis*, are to an important extent concerned with her philosophical position. John Wisdom's "appreciation" is reprinted from *Mind*, and the volume ends with a Stebbing bibliography.

Laird's essay is somewhat rambling and inconclusive, but he draws attention to the principal point of weakness in Stebbing's political writings. A moral attitude is not in itself a political policy. Stebbing was anxious to insist (as against the constitution-makers, the worshippers of legislation) that without vision the people perish; it does not follow that vision, by itself, will save them. To talk scornfully of "mere machinery" is to betray an ignorance of political realities.

In his *Moral Ends and Means*, H. B. Acton develops a not unconnected theme. The visionary exhorts us to keep our eyes on the promised land and to think of the action we now undertake as a *means*, to be judged, solely, by its relationship to that ultimate objective. Acton argues that it can never be our duty to reject present obligations for the sake of the future, unless "the future" is some quite specific objective (as the "promised land" cannot be) attainable through our immediate action. His essay explores implications of the maxim "the end justifies the means" within the system of conventional moral thinking; what is needed, we may feel, is a far more critical examination of the *logic* of "justification". How *exactly* can the fact that an act has certain consequences modify its own moral character?

There is one other ethical essay, *The Concert Ticket*, in which Austin Duncan-Jones attempts to show how an apparently trivial problem leads us to reflect seriously on general moral principles, when what he calls "a limited morality" (roughly, "civic goodness") fails to provide us with guidance. Duncan-Jones is at his most ingenious, but is this really how "moral reflection" is occasioned, even the moral reflection of Dons? Wouldn't there be something ridiculous, pathological even, in the behaviour of a man who was thus perturbed about the disposal of a concert ticket? The interesting thing in Duncan-Jones's essay is his distinction between *types* of morality. But as soon as this distinction is made, one begins to wonder whether there is any distinction between sociology and ethics, except the amateurishness of the latter. Duncan-Jones thinks that our moral conclusions "can be correct or incorrect" (p. 96) but he suggests no better method of demonstrating their truth than an appeal to "the authority of classical moral teachers" (p. 97), even though he recognizes the circularity in this procedure. The slide from semi-sociological ethics into dogmatism is all too easy.

There are three papers on logic: C. A. Mace on *The Logic of Elucidation*, A. C. Ewing on *Philosophical Analysis*, and Max Black on *Logic and Semantics*. Mace's essay is brief and light-hearted, but raises an important issue. Is it possible not to be "misleading"?

How can we "make ourselves clear", about philosophy in particular? Mace rightly insists that the philosopher must be given time to develop his position. At the same time, it won't really do to conclude, with Mace, that "the appropriate reaction to a philosophical remark is not to say 'How true', or to say 'What nonsense', but to say 'Tell me more'" (p. 62). If we *always* say, in the face of criticism, "But I haven't finished yet"; or, "Of course, I don't *quite* mean that", communication becomes impossible. "Is it true or is it false?" is not always the most useful question to ask, but neither is "it is and it isn't" always the most useful sort of answer. Sometimes we *can* say, "What nonsense!", although not as often as some philosophers like to think. And Mace doesn't really show that we need a *logic* of elucidation, nor indeed what it would be like to have one; better controversial habits are what we really need.

Ewing draws attention to a number of important objections to the view that sentences which "express the analysis of a proposition" are synonymous with sentences which express that proposition itself, or, to put the matter differently, that analysis tells us something we really knew all the time; and also provides grounds for rejecting Stebbing's view that "analysis" consists in mentioning the implications of the proposition being analysed. His own conclusion is that to analyse is "to give a selection of the implications of the propositions analysed adequate to display the ultimate elements of which the objects to which it refers are composed and the relations of these elements" (p. 78). This will mean, of course, that the "analyst" is committed to a theory of ultimates, a conclusion which both Ewing and the reviewer, although for different reasons, find perfectly satisfactory.

Max Black sets out to show that "contemporary syntax and semantics has nothing of importance to contribute to the philosophical question of the 'nature of logic'" (p. 127). Neither the syntactical nor the newer semantical theory can distinguish logical from other formal, but clearly non-logical, relationships, nor can either theory explain why we proceed as we do in showing others that a certain sort of argument is valid. Black seems to me to have established both these points.

In *The Grounds of Induction in Professor Whitehead's Philosophy of Nature*, Ruth Saw has written an unusually clear and coherent account of Whitehead's theory of induction. L. J. Russell in his *Epistemology and the Ego-centric Predicament* argues (1) that statements about our own "experience" are no more trustworthy than statements about "what is occurring in a public place" (p. 141), and (2) that there is no way of "making science more certain" by any sort of extra-scientific epistemological inquiry. In any inquiry, he



maintains, we already presuppose the existence of "a world of men and things"; we do this just as much when we inquire into what *we* experience as when we inquire into what anyone else experiences. This is an important point, worthy of development in greater detail; there are signs that the vogue for phenomenalism is coming to an end, but the case for realism is by no means made secure. Russell's second point is that the evidence for any epistemological doctrine is that we can and do engage in certain forms of inquiry; hence epistemology cannot "justify" science—rather, science "justifies" epistemology. This is a not unenticing view, and certainly Russell is right in rejecting the "underpinning" conception of philosophy's function; at the same time the philosopher does seem to bring forward considerations and arguments (e.g. the infinite regress argument) which lend independent support to philosophical conclusions. When the scientist turns for information to the philosopher, is the philosopher no more than a mirror in which the scientist sees himself for the first time?

The essays so far considered set no rivers on fire, but in their various ways they throw a certain light on problems of contemporary concern; the other two essays are of a much less satisfactory kind. Beatrice Edgell in *The Way of Behaviour* seems not at all to see the importance of "the biological theory of ideas", with its rejection of the view that an "idea" is a species of object. And what is one to make of such remarks as this: "The three old laws of thought, A is A, A is not non-A, and A must be either A or not-A embody profound psychological truth" (p. 38)? Hilda Oakeley on *Is there Reason in History?* is rhetoric.

J. A. PASSMORE.

STUDIES IN ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY. By Gerhard Adler. London: Kegan Paul, 1948. Pp. viii + 214. Price: 21s.

Some eight lectures given over a period of ten years are collected in this volume. The first set, "A Comparative Study of the Technique of Analytical Psychology", was delivered at the Tavistock Clinic in London—another sign of the eclecticism of that remarkable institution. The others cover a variety of topics: the detailed study of a dream, the ego and the cycle of life, a psychological approach to religion, and an essay on Jung's contribution to modern thought and awareness.

Of these, the first is in many ways the most satisfactory. The author describes in some detail the procedures and principles of analytical psychology. He feels that Jung's methods and general theories offer the best, or perhaps the most humane, techniques with which to approach the problem of maladaptive behaviour. But, unlike

many other analysts, he does not vilify the other two systems (in this case individual psychology and psychoanalysis). He maintains that the Adlerian and Freudian approaches have their uses in special cases. They are, he says, examples of necessary analytic or disjunctive techniques. But Jung's system attempts a synthesis, a re-interpretation of the personality at each step of the analysis, not only after the causal factors in symptom formation have been uncovered.

Dr. Adler's main interest in a symptom or a dream is discovering its function, its symbolic value, in the dynamic pattern of the personality as it is now, not so much in its origin at some remote period under some special stress. His interpretation of artistic products and religious experiences is therefore far more "understandable" than that of a Freudian analyst. By "understandable" is meant here that it sounds more like what painters and mystics have said about their inner processes, visions and aspirations.

What the layman may think or believe about the "collective unconscious" and "archetypes" will not affect the scientist's attempts to generalise and systematise. The important aspect of this book is its dispassionate weighing of different analytic techniques and the honest examination of the author's own beliefs, theories and practices in a discipline that has not yet affected philosophy very much, but has profoundly modified many areas of psychology.

O. A. OESER.

TELEPATHY AND MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY. By Jan Ehrenwald. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1947. Price: 12s. 6d. net.

In this book a psychiatrist sets out to give a scientific foundation and new impetus to the old problem of whether telepathy or extra-sensory perception is possible. When dealing with the work of Rhine (which he accepts uncritically) he makes statements such as the following:

"It is true to say that such an insistence on two, and only two, alternative reactions is one of the prerequisites of the statistical method."

"... the infinite variety of thought and emotion, of meaning and purpose that constitute mental life is fundamentally inaccessible to quantitative treatment."

These quotations show that he knows nothing about the technique of statistical analysis and rejects the fundamental approach of modern experimental psychology. He accepts the experiments of Rhine as establishing without doubt the existence of telepathy. He proceeds to prove it from his own experience, including the following remarkable logical sequence: When he started his training as an analyst he was

steeped in Freudianism and his patients produced Freudian dreams. He then became interested in Alfred Adler and his patients then produced dreams susceptible only to Adlerian interpretation. Finally, he became influenced by Jung, and, behold, his patients produced material from the collective unconscious and archetypes. This kind of confused thinking, having preceded his chapters on "Fresh Light on Psychiatry", needs no further discussion. The most baffling thing about the book is an introduction by Gardner Murphy commending it and stating that Dr. Ehrenwald's book throws new illumination into the darkness that is telepathy and that it shows psychological science to have begun a serious effort to clarify and explain the almost uncharted area of telepathic phenomena.

O. A. OESER.

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

(Mention in this list neither precludes nor guarantees later review.)

**MAN'S QUEST FOR SIGNIFICANCE.** By Lewis Way. (George Allen and Unwin, 1948. 211 pp.) Price (U.K.), 12s. 6d.

An approach to social psychology based on the doctrines of Adler.

**PSYCHO-ANALYSIS TODAY.** Edited by Sandor Lorand. (George Allen and Unwin, 1949. 404 pp.) Price (U.K.), 25s.

Essays on a variety of topics by Melanie Klein, A. A. Brill, Ernest Jones, and others.

**MAGIC, SCIENCE, AND RELIGION, AND OTHER ESSAYS.** By Bronislaw Malinowski. (Beacon Press, 1948. xii + 327 pp.)

Reprints five papers that appeared between 1916 and 1941.

**BARBARA CELARENT.** By Thomas Gilby. (Longmans, 1949. xiii + 303 pp.) Price (Aust.), 23s. 6d.

"A description of scholastic dialectic"—or rather a survey and interpretation of the logic of Aquinas.

**HUMAN DESTINY.** By Lecomte du Noüy. (Longmans, 1949. xix + 289 pp.) Price (Aust.), 23s. 6d.

A distinguished scientist "re-interprets" evolution, finding purpose in the history of life and arguing towards a reconciliation of science and religion.



**JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.** By Paul W. Toppan. (McGraw-Hill, 1949. x + 613 pp.) Price, \$5.00.

A fully documented survey of juvenile delinquency, dealing in turn with its nature and extent, its causation, and its treatment in court and elsewhere.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHIATRY.** By Desmond Curran and the late Eric Guttman. (Livingstone, 1949. viii + 252 pp., illustrated.) Price (U.K.), 12s. 6d.

Third edition, with an appendix on psychiatry associated with war conditions.

**CHANGING ATTITUDES IN SOVIET RUSSIA—THE FAMILY.** By Rudolf Schlesinger. (Kegan Paul, 1949. ix + 406 pp.) Price (U.K.), 25s.

**LECTURES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF LEIBNIZ.** By H. W. B. Joseph, edited by J. L. Austin. (O.U.P., 1949. 190 pp.) Price (U.K.), 15s.

**PHILOSOPHY FOR THE ORDINARY MAN.** By R. Osborn. (Quality Press, 1948. 143 pp.) Price (U.K.), 6s.

**THE STORY OF THE R.P.A.** By A. Gowans Whyte. (Watts, 1949. viii + 105 pp.) Price (U.K.), 5s.

**CHRISTIANITY AND FEAR.** By Oscar Pfister. (George Allen and Unwin, 1949. 589 pp.) Price (U.K.), 30s.

Originally published in German at Zurich, in 1944, this work makes use of psycho-analytic theories to criticise what the author regards as pathological malformations of Christianity.

**MENTAL READJUSTMENT.** By Sidonie Reiss. (George Allen and Unwin, 1949. 167 pp.) Price (U.K.), 10s. 6d.

An essay on child psychology and psychotherapy by a disciple of Adler.

**EARTHBOUND CHINA.** By Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih-i Chang. (Kegan Paul, 1949. xv + 319 pp., illustrated.) Price (U.K.), 18s.

A study of rural economy in Yunnan.